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OF OPINION AND DISCUSSION

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1957-1958

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Editorial

LATIN AMERICA presents a major challenge to Christianity. Here is one of the most extensive areas of the world. Indeed one of its nations, Brazil, in square miles is the largest country in the Western Hemisphere—with greater dimensions even than the United States or Canada. Throughout most of the region population is mounting rapidly and the city-ward movement is impressive. Buenos Aires is already the largest urban center in the Southern Hemisphere and Sao Paulo is said to be the most rapidly growing city on the planet. Except in agriculture, petroleum, and some forms of mining the natural resources have only begun to be tapped. Religiously the overwhelming majority of the population are nominally Roman Catholic. Here are more professed adherents of that faith than in all the rest of the world outside of Europe. Yet that Roman Catholicism is parasitic, it never has produced enough clergy to care for its constituency and it has very little share in the world-wide mission of the Roman Catholic Church to non-Christians. A large proportion of its clergy are still drawn from Europe and more missionaries go to it from the Roman Catholics of the United States than to any other portion of the globe. In some sections spiritualism is making marked headway. Secularism is even more rampant: for example, in Montevideo, capital of the socially progressive Uruguay, the leading newspaper prints the name of God without capitalizing it.

Can and is Protestantism rising to the challenge, and if so in what forms? We need to remember that Protestantism is primarily the product of the peoples of Northwestern Europe, either in their native habitats or in the nations established by them in the Americas, Australasia, and South Africa. It has never gained many adherents in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, the countries from which come the ancestors of the majority of the white population of Latin America. Protestantism has been planted in Latin America by immigration, mainly from Germany and to a less extent from the British Isles, the United States, and Italy. It has also been introduced by missionaries, predominantly from the United States. It is growing and becoming increasingly well rooted. In Chile, for instance, Protestants now total about a tenth of the population and are said to outnumber practicing Roman Catholics. However, it is significant that the most rapidly mounting Protestant groups in some countries are Pentecostals of varying kinds and with very little assistance from the outside. What is to be the future of Protestantism in Latin America? The answer to that question the articles in this current issue are designed to contribute.

K. S. L.

Protestantism in Latin America

I. Brazil

M. RICHARD SHAULL

EXACTLY ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO the first Protestant missionaries from the United States and Europe arrived in Brazil. They distributed the Bible, traveled widely, and brought together small groups of interested people wherever they could get a hearing, both in the larger cities and on the many *fazendas* (plantations) in the interior. From the beginning they were well received and in many places were listened to eagerly. Soon a good number of missionaries, representing principally the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist Churches, were firmly established. Quite a number of primary and secondary schools were started. Churches developed which were evangelistically minded from the start and many of which soon became self-supporting. During the first decades of the present century large numbers of German Protestants emigrated to Brazil.¹

The mission boards have continued to maintain a large force, and to their number has been added the influx of representatives of the "sects" which have come in constantly increasing numbers since the beginning of the Second World War. But today the center of the life and growth of Brazilian Protestantism is to be found in the strong national churches which are very active, well organized, with strong leadership and growing rapidly. A recent report prepared by the Missionary Research Library estimates the Protestant community at about two and a half million communicant members, which is equivalent to 4 per cent of the population, and affirms that we have in Brazil the "most rapid Protestant growth, percentagewise, of any country in the world." If we add to this the fact that several million more

¹ Despite the fact that these immigrants and their descendants constitute the largest Protestant community in Brazil of about 700,000 people, this article is not concerned primarily with them. We are studying here the impact of Protestantism upon the Brazilian people and nation and the opportunities and problems which the young Brazilian churches are facing at the present time. The German churches have tended to minister to their own members almost exclusively and in general have remained quite isolated. There are some indications that this situation is beginning to change, but their problems are still rather unique and deserve a study apart.

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of the total population are in constant contact with Protestantism, and that there are probably more Brazilian Protestant ministers than native-born Roman Catholic priests, we have perhaps a clearer picture of Protestant growth and influence.

This unique growth of Protestantism in an area traditionally Roman Catholic is not coincidental. To understand it, at least two factors need to be taken into account:

1. *The unusual religious situation in Brazil a century ago.* The Brazilian people are by nature very religious. This interest often does not transcend the level of primitive superstition, but it is still very strong and was even more intense a century ago. In recent years a type of Spiritualism which, for the masses, borders on animism, has grown so rapidly that it now claims 10,000,000 adherents in a total population of 58,000,000. In the last few months a mission team working among industrial workers in Sao Paulo has been quite surprised to discover the depth of this religious curiosity even among workers in the large modern city.

It is a simple fact that the Roman Catholic Church, from the earliest period of colonization, never met this need adequately. Emile Leonard, in his careful study of the history of Protestantism in Brazil, concludes that here, one hundred years ago, Catholicism was still in a pre-Reformation state. Portuguese Catholicism never felt the impact of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. In most places in Brazil in the nineteenth century there existed the same spiritual anxiety found in Europe three hundred years earlier, with the same low spiritual vitality, moral corruption, and indifference among the leaders of the Church.

At the same time, many of those in the Roman Church who took their faith most seriously were strongly influenced by the Jansenist Movement and their Catholicism was characterized, in the words of Professor Leonard, by "austere piety, interest in the Scriptures and a strong feeling of independence toward Rome." The Church had never satisfied the religious needs of the Brazilian people but had turned their attention toward the gospel and aroused their interest in the Bible. It is interesting to see how the early missionaries found everywhere people anxious to study the Bible. In several instances, men from far in the interior bought the Bible and got together groups of their friends to study it. When the missionaries arrived, years later, they found communities of believers waiting to be received into the Protestant Church. This situation, so favorable to the growth of Protestantism, was aided by the anticlerical attitude of many politicians and intellectuals during the latter part of the past century. These people were

favorably disposed to the new faith, gave it legal protection and open support, and often were among its first converts.

2. *The demonstrated vitality of the Protestant movement from the very start.* The great majority of the early American missionaries were of a decided pietistic tendency. They were not great theologians and their understanding of the gospel was often somewhat limited. But they possessed a warm evangelical faith which won converts, and they were able to transmit this same vitality. From the beginning the local church usually became a dynamic community and a center of evangelistic concern. The members of the church took for granted that they were all called to witness to their faith, and each local congregation established new preaching points in other parts of the city or on the large *fazendas*.

In these efforts lay initiative was very strong. There were few pastors, and many of them spent most of their time visiting churches over a large area. Each local congregation learned to get along for itself, and the new evangelistic centers which it established were usually under lay direction. There are many instances, from the earliest days, of farmers who, when moving to another part of the country, would soon gather a congregation around them, even when they were far from any missionary or any other Evangelical community. In the interior as well as in the coastal cities the Evangelicals formed a natural and closely knit community.

These factors combined to create a situation in which, usually without much planning, the Protestant churches spread across the country with great rapidity. This growth was aided by the way in which the Protestant churches were able to reach people of almost all social classes. Here, as in other countries in Latin America, the base of Protestant growth was found in the lower classes. But here, in contrast with other areas, the church was able, very early in its development, to reach a rather surprising number of intellectuals and representatives of the upper classes. One of the first converts of the first Presbyterian missionaries was Jose Manuel da Conceição, a very capable priest who became the first Brazilian Presbyterian minister and gave the rest of his life to itinerant evangelism in the interior of the state of Sao Paulo. The history of Brazilian Protestantism is dotted with frequent repetitions of this sort of conversion and even today the number of priests who are converted to Protestantism is rather high. In the early days, an unusual number of people from some of the oldest and most respected families, especially in Sao Paulo, were converted and many of them provided outstanding leadership for the young church. In the interior, many times the *fazenda* owner would be converted and would then form a

small Evangelical community which would include practically all the people on the *fazenda*, from the owner down to the poorest worker and his family.

On these foundations a powerful Evangelical movement has grown up. It has strong leadership, a solid economic foundation, is well organized and growing. One consequence of this rapid growth is the fact that we have here a church which is largely lacking in a sense of history and in historical perspective. The oldest churches and institutions go back only a few generations, and in many areas a very large percentage of members and leaders are recent converts. This, of course, can be seen as an advantage: They should be more flexible and free to adapt to new conditions and situations. At the same time, this lack of a long historical perspective may have the opposite effect. Such a church can become so impressed with its own success and so contented with what it is doing that it never raises very serious questions about how it goes about its mission. Several Brazilian leaders have spoken of their church as an adolescent church. Adolescents often feel insecure, are sensitive to criticism, and not too given to an objective analysis of their own weaknesses.

At this moment, however, Brazilian Protestantism is entering a new era in which, if it is to continue its rapid expansion, it must make radical adjustments to new situations. Will it be able to do this? Here is the crucial question.

The careful observer cannot fail to see that certain things are happening in Brazil which will have profound consequences for the future of Protestantism. In spite of the Protestant Church's progress and power, it cannot simply go on as before without coming to terms with these events. One such factor is rapid social change. Communities long static are now being shaken up by industrial developments, modern means of communication, and the impact of new ideas. In the past, to a great degree the strength of the Evangelical churches lay in the fact that the church constituted a small, closely knit community within the larger natural community on the *fazenda* or in the small town. Today rural communities are being broken up by mass exodus to the cities and by industrial expansion. New ideas and the desire for greater justice have created new tensions on the plantations. And in the larger cities the individual often does not belong to any community at all and is influenced by all the thoughts and forces stirring around him.

The missionary task is complicated by the new context of evangelism. People in the large cities are still religiously inclined, but they are not flocking to the churches as they once did. We are accustomed to proclaim the gospel in terms which appealed to a former generation but which may

not make much sense to the modern man with his sense of meaninglessness, his insecurity, lack of community and concern for social and political questions.

In addition to these problems, we face a renascent Roman Catholic Church. We no longer have to do with the complacent and very corrupt pre-Reformation Catholicism. It has been greatly perturbed by the impact of the new social ideologies and the rapid growth of Protestantism and Spiritualism. Contact with the progressive thought and life of the Church in France and elsewhere has had its effect. The old institution is beginning to stir, slowly but surely.

One evidence of this new vitality is the resurgence of clericalism. Throughout Brazil the hierarchy is trying to gain political power, to control the new social forces, exert greater influence over the labor movement, and direct the institutions of education and culture. These concerns are not new but today they are being pursued with extraordinary zeal and a carefully planned strategy. For a small but significant minority of priests and laymen in the Church, the new situation has led to intellectual and spiritual renewal. Modern translations of the Bible have been published and are being distributed; the Church sponsors Bible Days in the large cities and a Franciscan monk has begun a correspondence course of Bible study which now has several thousand professional people enrolled in it. Centers for the study of intellectual and social problems in the light of Catholic doctrine are springing up in the large cities. Bishops and priests have gained a great deal of publicity for their efforts to work with the government in programs of education and social assistance in rural areas and in attempts to solve the social problems in the slums of Rio. Small groups of very dedicated laymen are active in the Workers' and Students' Movements.

We ought not to exaggerate the importance of these new forces. Change does not come easy in the Roman Church, especially where it has been static for so long. It is doubtful if Latin-American Catholicism still preserves the classical Christian heritage in a sufficient degree to go far on the path to renewal. But something is happening here, and we can hardly predict yet what will come of it.

Whatever the end result of this development, it raises problems which Protestantism cannot ignore. What can the church do in the face of this threat of clerical domination and all its probable consequences for Protestantism? What will happen to our evangelistic opportunity if Roman Catholicism takes the lead in concern for the social problems of the industrial worker and peasant? In the olden days our encounter with Catholicism

led primarily to polemics. But the Brazilian of today is often so far from the Catholic heritage that polemical discussions do not interest him. Or, as frequently happens, he is active in the newer Catholic Action groups. He may be greatly disturbed by many things in his church, but attacks against it offend him. How do we witness to the gospel in this situation?

Alongside these external factors are the internal tensions which are becoming more evident within the Protestant churches today. The struggle between those who see the necessity of meeting the new situation and those who do not quite naturally leads to tension. Add to this the very rapid educational and cultural development of the new generation, the large number of young people who come from very humble homes but who are now finishing university and coming to grips with the major issues of the day. Many of them are reading the best theological literature in English and French and are impatient with a church not yet aware of these problems. One Brazilian leader recently remarked that our church and all its institutions are in a state of transition. The fact that the church is becoming aware of this is one of the most hopeful signs in the present situation.

In what direction will this transition go? The answer to this question will depend, I believe, upon the way the church responds to certain major problems with which it is now struggling. I should like to mention some of them here, indicate what is being done to meet them, and something of the task which still remains.

1. *The question of theological renovation.* After one hundred years, Brazilian Protestantism has produced no first-class theologian, no significant theological literature, even for its own people, and no work capable of interpreting the Protestant intellectual heritage in the world of culture. The causes of this theological lag are not hard to find. The early missionaries belonged to a pietistic tradition which saw no great need for serious theological effort. Many early leaders, especially in the Presbyterian Church, placed great emphasis upon right doctrine, but this often meant assent to and communication of certain rigid theological formulae. These doctrines were memorized by the theological student and preached from the pulpit, but no one could see very clearly their relevance to the problems of life and thought. One of the most unfortunate results of this tendency was that a certain number of the more capable pastors and laymen became dissatisfied but never found their way beyond it except to revolt against it.

Today this situation is changing rapidly. Among theological students and pastors there is a demand for more serious and vital theological thought. Many younger laymen feel the need for a theological orientation which will

give meaning to their life and work and arm them to meet the problems of their time. This need is gradually being met. Much of the best theological literature is being imported and distributed widely. Visiting professors from other countries are coming to the theological seminaries each year, and an increasing number of pastors, theological students, and lay leaders are going abroad, both to Europe and America, for special study. All this has combined to create a most encouraging theological ferment which is leaving some people a bit perturbed but is helping many to a deeper, more relevant and more biblical understanding of the faith.

This process will continue and needs encouragement. In recent months a group of the most capable younger leaders of the church have begun to make plans for the publication of a theological journal. A recent visitor has just written that, in his opinion, the greatest single contribution the American churches could make to Brazilian Protestantism would be to provide good theological literature in English for the many people who are eager for the opportunity of further study and reading.

My own opinion is that the time has come when the seminaries of the major Protestant denominations should unite to sponsor a center for graduate study in Brazil. We are, I believe, ready for such a venture. The churches have people who, with the aid of visiting professors from abroad, could well do such a job. An ever-increasing number of pastors are anxious to do graduate study but cannot afford to go to America or Europe. Moreover, study abroad does not always offer the best preparation for leadership in Brazil. A graduate center could, at this time, make a unique contribution to the life of the church and also serve to stimulate the production of theological literature which is so desperately needed.

2. *The Church, the Christian, and the world.* The layman who lives in today's world and sees the problems which Brazil is facing must constantly ask himself what all this has to do with his Christian faith. The question becomes especially acute when he attempts to relate his faith to the moral decisions which he must make daily in his profession. The understanding of the Christian life which he has hardly prepares him to do this. He has been provided with a series of precepts which often have to do with secondary issues. When he tries to live as a Christian in his profession, he either does not know what to do or despairs of ever putting his faith into practice. Too often the Christian ethic seems to be a heavy burden to be borne rather than a thrilling adventure in service to Jesus Christ. This problem exists elsewhere than in Brazil, and no easy answer can be found for it. But throughout the country we find individuals and groups strug-

gling with it. In the seminaries the question is constantly under discussion, and many groups of young people and students are engaged in Bible study in search for an answer. The Student Christian Movement has organized groups for study of such issues in the different professional schools in the major universities and has also sponsored consultations of teachers for the study of their vocation. A new mission has been established in a large industrial area in Sao Paulo and brings together groups of factory workers in the factories for the same purpose. The Evangelical Confederation has recently organized a Department of Church and Society which is related to the World Council's study of rapid social change and has been bringing together small groups of politicians and others for discussion of the nature of Christian witness in the world.

3. *Ecumenical relationships.* The Evangelical churches in Brazil have been unusually isolated from the rest of the world. Until recently churches of other continents took little interest in them and provided few opportunities for contact. Many of the missionaries, the only tie with the outside world, were far in the interior, almost totally unrelated to the life of the Brazilian churches. And these, in turn, were so busy developing their work and taking advantage of their evangelistic opportunity that they had little time for anything else.

Just at the moment when the churches were coming out of their isolation, the intense propaganda against the Ecumenical Movement hit Brazil and found a ready ear. Practically nothing has been done to educate the church regarding the significance of the Ecumenical Movement, and many people accepted at face value the accusations against its leaders. At least one church, already in the World Council, withdrew, and quite a few people came to think of the Ecumenical Movement as having a definite party line which it sought to impose everywhere that it penetrated.

This campaign has collapsed completely, but some of the fears which it instilled linger on. Coupled with this is the justified desire of a young church to be free to work out solutions to its own problems in its own way and not be forced to accept patterns imported from elsewhere. But one fundamental question remains: Will the Brazilian churches fall prey to the temptation to go their own way without taking seriously their unity in Christ's body with the churches of the rest of the world? Or will they seek to live in a more vital relationship with the rest of the body, so that they may both receive from it and contribute to it as they attempt to fulfill their mission?

I believe that there are real signs of hope. A growing number of

people are becoming aware of their oneness with Christians of other lands and hoping to find more ways of giving concrete expression to it. If they are to succeed will depend to no small degree upon the willingness of the churches of America and Europe to take initiatives which will make such contacts possible: more scholarships for Brazilian pastors and students to study abroad, a greater number of visits from church leaders of other lands, and the encouragement of the publication of literature in Portuguese on the significance of our unity in Christ and of the Ecumenical Movement. An interesting step in this direction is the recent decision of the World Presbyterian Alliance to hold its next International Congress in Brazil at the time of the Presbyterian Centennial celebrations.

More disturbing perhaps is the strong denominationalism which seems to predominate everywhere. It is a strange fact that, while in Asia the younger churches have rebelled against the imported denominationalism of the West and taken the lead in efforts to transcend it, here in Brazil, where the Roman Catholic Church constantly accuses Protestants of having given birth to the chaos of 265 sects, we seem to preserve this imported product and cling to it more tenaciously than the mother churches. There are very few ecumenical contacts across denominational lines; the tendency is to feel that each church should do everything it can on its own and co-operate only when there is no other way; and the Evangelical Confederation has accomplished very little in bringing about closer co-operation. At the same time, there are some indications of a changing attitude. In the last few years an audio-visual center, a co-operative effort at publication and distribution of literature, and the Department of Church and Society have come into existence and received greater support than might have been anticipated. The Student Christian Movement reaches only a small number of secondary and university students but does provide them with a real ecumenical experience. Last year the leaders of the Methodist and Presbyterian youth work met together for their leadership training program and this year they hope to include several other denominational groups in it.

4. *Encounter with the sects.* Nothing perhaps is more disturbing in the Brazilian scene than the evident growth of the sects and the way in which the churches representing classical Protestantism, in spite of their rapid development, are already losing the initiative to these groups in the area of evangelistic expansion.

Why is this happening? I know of no clear answer to this question, but certain facts seem clear. In the Pentecostal and other groups everyone participates actively in the worship and work of the church. Every local

congregation is, in fact, a missionary society and every member is made aware of his missionary responsibility. Our churches easily come to express the interests and mentality of the middle class while these groups have been, from the beginning, an expression of the life of the masses. We tend to develop a pattern of church life which is more or less static, to have a well-organized ecclesiastical institution which functions well under trained leadership. The sects may tend to be more chaotic but they have a more dynamic pattern of Christian life.

Here again the problem we face is by no means limited to Brazil. But the tremendous growth of some of these groups plus the fact that we are on such a unique missionary frontier means that we are perhaps more intensely aware of it. It may also mean that our churches will be led more quickly to face and respond to the challenge the sects represent. Already certain things are happening which may indicate that this process is under way. Among many theological students and pastors the question is the object of constant discussion. A study booklet on the problem—*The Church: A Missionary Community*, which was used in preparation for the last National Methodist and Presbyterian Youth Conferences—has gone through three editions and aroused a great deal of interest. Several interesting experiments are being carried on at present in both rural and urban areas and may point the way to possible answers.

To someone who comes to Brazil from the more stable situation of churches in Western Europe or North America, Brazilian Protestantism may seem somewhat confusing and unstable. But it also exerts an unusual attraction over him. For here something is happening. The church is developing rapidly on a tremendous frontier. It is becoming more and more aware of its possibilities and its weaknesses and is beginning to face problems which are vital to the church in many other parts of the world as well.

2. *Argentina and Uruguay*

B. FOSTER STOCKWELL

I. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

A DESCRIPTION of the religious situation in Argentina and Uruguay must begin with the Roman Catholic Church, for these countries were colonized and populated mainly by nominal Catholics from southern Europe. The Argentine constitution, adopted in 1853, maintained the official link between the Church and the State and stipulated that the president must be Roman Catholic. While the State undertook to support the Church, it maintained a certain independence over against the latter analogous to the "patronage" exercised by the Spanish crown before Argentina became independent; and differences of opinion on the appointment of certain prelates have led (though not often) to serious tension between Church and State. The liberal movement in Argentina during the last third of the century, stimulated by the immigration of considerable numbers of non-Catholics who demanded freedom of worship, led to the establishment of the civil registry of births, civil marriage, civil cemeteries, universal lay education in the primary grades, and religious freedom under constitutional guarantees. Though the Roman Catholic Church maintained many parochial schools, and though more than a third of the secondary education was in private hands, mostly Catholic, the principle of government-supported lay education was not seriously challenged until the time of Perón. The support the Church gave him was bought at the price of introducing religious (Catholic) instruction into the schools. At the same time Perón's government set up a bureau in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship for the registry and control of non-Roman Catholic religious organizations. This bureau interpreted its powers rather widely and became, in Perón's time, a source of considerable vexation to Protestants. These difficulties have diminished under the present provisional regime, and efforts are being made to secure the elimination of this government office. This does not seem probable, for such bureaus have a way of perpetuating themselves;

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but it is unlikely that in the near future there will be any serious infringement of religious freedom in Argentina.

In this respect the attitude of the Uruguayan government is much more categorical. A strong secularistic and even anticlerical movement developed in Uruguay in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and this led eventually to the official separation of Church and State in the constitution of 1917. No country now enjoys greater freedom of religion. The Roman Catholic Church, thrown on its own resources, has gained ground in general esteem and influence during the past forty years, but it does not exercise the power which the Argentine Church still retains in the life of the neighboring republic.

How extensive and profound is the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina? The Church authorities, in their arguments for religious (Catholic) instruction in the public schools, maintain that more than 90 per cent of the population is Roman Catholic. This is true, if at all, only in the very general sense that perhaps nine tenths of the population have Catholic forebears and have made no other religious commitment of a positive kind. As a matter of fact, there are literally millions in Argentina who have no vital connection with any kind of religious faith. Clericalism has been held in check by liberal governments; anticlericalism is to be found mainly among Socialists and Communists. An impartial observer could hardly deny that there has been a definite resurgence of Roman Catholic activity and influence since the International Eucharistic Congress held in Buenos Aires in 1934. The entry of Spanish priests during the years of the Spanish Civil War gave the Argentine Church additional personnel. Catholic Action has developed its typical programs among the laity (men and women), youth, professional men, and workers. The petulant persecution of the Church by Perón and his followers toward the end of his regime and the subsequent revolution gave the Church the opportunity of freeing itself from its all too evident connections with the dictator, and the Church even claimed credit for the success of the revolution. General Lonardi, in his first revolutionary address in Buenos Aires, expressed the hope that a concordat might be arranged with the Vatican. Argentine liberals would regard such an agreement as definitely retrograde in tendency. Lonardi's alleged involvement with reactionary proponents of this scheme may have influenced his displacement by General Aramburu, who has steered a clearer course. His government yielded to Catholic pressure in suspending all proceedings for divorce, permitted by Perón as a blow at the Church, and in agreeing to the establishment of twelve new dioceses and two new arch-

dioceses, with an increase in the ecclesiastical budget covered by the State; but President Aramburu has not given in to the clamor of the Church for the reintroduction of Catholic teaching in the public schools.

Since the Revolution in September, 1955, the Church has been very active in the press and in the fields of education and politics. It has secured at least tentative permission to organize private universities, where its youth may be trained under Catholic auspices. It is still a moot point whether these universities, if founded, will be subject to State control in granting their professional degrees. The Jesuits constitute the spearhead of this training program for laymen. In the political field the Catholics have been unable to unite in a single party. In the recent elections for the constitutional convention the largest of the Catholic parties, the Christian Democrats, polled only about 420,000 votes (5 per cent of the total), and ran more than 100,000 behind the Socialists, who are anticlerical. About three fourths of the Christian Democratic votes were cast by women. Such figures offer no support for the hollow claim that 90 per cent of the Argentine people are Catholic.¹

II. THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

Argentina is one of the most cosmopolitan countries in the world. Her population of about twenty million is largely of immigrant origin, mostly European; nearly two thirds of her people trace their ancestry back to Italy or Spain and are nominally Roman Catholic. But large contingents of Protestant immigrants have come from northern Europe—Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and Great Britain—and have planted their churches in their adopted country. These churches, precisely because they are surrounded by a Roman Catholic population, have tended to become little foreign enclaves, hardly modified by the surrounding culture nor in active intercourse with it. One may easily attend Sunday services in English (Anglican, Scotch, or American), French, German, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Welsh, Armenian, Hungarian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Japanese. This would seem to open the doors wide to ecumenical relationships among the Protestant churches of the country. As a matter of fact, most of these churches are related to their sister member-churches of the World Council only through their parent bodies, and they have almost no touch with the Spanish-speaking churches of Argentine Protestantism. Thousands of men and women who speak Spanish in their work six days in the week

¹ For some of the above data I am indebted to a young Methodist lawyer, who gave me a memorandum on the Roman Catholic Church in Argentina.

(many of them second or third generation Argentines) hear the Word preached and receive the sacraments on Sunday only through the language of their forebears. The younger generation in these churches tends to forget the language and therewith to lose its religious faith as well. Some foreign-speaking churches have established secondary services and communicants' classes in Spanish. One notable exception is the Waldensian Church, which had its origin in the large groups of north Italian Protestants who settled in Uruguay and Argentina about a century ago. They were French-speaking when they came, but little by little their churches have become wholly Spanish-speaking. They take an active part in interdenominational enterprises. The use of a common language seems to be an essential condition of this kind of fellowship.

How many Protestants are there in Argentina, and what proportion of them belong, respectively, to the immigrant groups and the native churches? It is impossible to answer this question accurately. Some ethnic groups, like the Scandinavians, regard their whole community as Protestant. Some native churches renounce "counting the hosts of Israel" and keep no statistics, and hence one cannot test their claims to a rather large membership. In the national census for 1947 more than 310,000 people signed up as Protestants. This was at a time when the Perón regime was working cordially with the Roman Catholic Church, and hence some (one cannot say how many) were reluctant to fly Protestant colors. Moreover, census-takers in these countries are unfamiliar with the difference between "Christian" and "Catholic" or "Protestant" and tend to classify every Christian as Catholic. In the years since the national census of 1895 the whole population had increased fourfold, and the Protestant figures had increased twelvefold. Ten years have passed since 1947, the population has increased by two millions, and the growth of the churches has gone on apace. It seems reasonable to suppose that Argentine Protestants now total nearly half a million and that the majority of them are linked with the numberless Spanish-speaking congregations scattered all over the country.

Uruguay, with approximately three million people, is perhaps as cosmopolitan as Argentina, but the groups of Protestant immigrants are much smaller than in the latter country. The only exception to this are the Waldensians, who settled there in considerable numbers during the last four decades of the nineteenth century and now constitute by far the largest single Spanish-speaking Protestant church of the country. The last national census (1908) classified 2 per cent of the people as Protestant. The present percentage is perhaps higher, but accurate statistics are not available.

The Spanish-speaking churches, which are the outgrowth of active missionary work during the past ninety years, are divided among many denominations. Offshoots of North American churches have been planted by Methodists, Southern Baptists, Missouri Synod Lutherans, United Lutherans, Disciples of Christ, Mennonites, the Church of the Nazarene, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Seventh-Day Adventists, Brethren, and Pentecostals. From Europe have come representatives of the Plymouth Brethren, the Evangelical Union of South America, the New Apostolic Church, the Salvation Army, and other groups of Pentecostals (Swedish and Italian). On the fringes are Christian Scientists, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses. It is indeed a variegated picture. There is little sense of overlapping, for the field is so vast; but the use of so many denominational names unquestionably blunts the Protestant witness and confuses many who feel a certain attraction to our form of faith.

Official Protestant co-operation in Argentina and Uruguay expresses itself in the Confederation of Evangelical (Protestant) Churches of the River Plate. This organization, now nearly twenty years old, is constituted by representatives of a score of church bodies. Of the foreign-speech groups, the German Evangelical Synod, the Scots Presbyterians, the Swiss Reformed, the French Reformed, and the Armenian Congregationalists are affiliated, though one can hardly say their membership, in most cases, is more than nominal. A number of independent congregations belong to the Confederation. The main burden of its work is carried by Waldensians, Methodists, Disciples of Christ, United Lutherans, Mennonites, the Church of the Nazarene, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Some of the most numerous and active bodies of Protestants, however, are not affiliated with the Confederation nor wish to be—the Southern Baptists, the Missouri Synod Lutherans, the Plymouth Brethren, the Pentecostals, and the Adventists. Certainly not half of the Spanish-speaking Protestants are now represented in the Confederation. This presents serious obstacles to united Protestant efforts.

Nonetheless, the Confederation includes important sectors of Protestantism in these two countries and upholds the ecumenical ideal and spirit. The General Secretary, a woman pastor of the Disciples of Christ, gives her full time to projects of the Confederation, especially in the field of Christian education, public relations, and evangelism. A Secretary for Literature (of The Methodist Church) devotes full time to translation and editorial work; and a half-time Secretary for Youth Work travels among youth groups both inside and outside the Confederation. The Confederation,

whose presidency has rotated among several of the affiliated churches, has been an important rallying-point on questions of religious freedom, especially in Argentina.

Notable advance has been made in recent years in the recruiting and training of Protestant ministers and other church workers in Argentina and Uruguay. Existing seminaries and Bible schools have been strengthened, and new institutions have been founded. A dozen such schools now exist in the region, most of them in or near Buenos Aires. Four churches—Methodist, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian (U.S.A.), and Waldensian—sponsor the Union Theological Seminary (*Facultad Evangélica de Teología*) of Buenos Aires and are represented in the governing board, the teaching staff, and the student body. The enrollment of this school has tripled since 1942; there are now more than eighty students, two thirds of whom are enrolled in the B.D. course on the same academic level as students who follow medicine or law in the national universities. The teaching staff is international as well as interdenominational in character, including both Europeans and Americans; and an increasing part of the teaching load is being carried by capable Latin Americans. About two thirds of the students come from Argentina and Uruguay, and the rest from the neighboring countries. Much of the interdenominational interest and conviction in Protestant circles radiates from this school.

Other churches have chosen to train their workers in denominational schools. The most important of these is the (Southern) Baptist Theological Seminary of Buenos Aires—a school with handsome buildings, a North American trained faculty, and a plan of training for Baptist pastors and women workers in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Chile. It is an excellent illustration of what mission board initiative, personnel, and funds can do in the education of national workers along denominational lines. There are about sixty students enrolled in the school. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, with some co-operation on the part of the Evangelical Union of South America, maintains a Bible school in Buenos Aires, with twenty-five to thirty students, and the Mennonites have smaller Bible schools in Montevideo and in the interior of Buenos Aires province. The Missouri Synod Lutherans have a well-equipped seminary which emphasizes their characteristic points of view. Lutherans of other varieties, including the United Lutherans of the U. S. and some of the immigrant Lutheran churches in Venezuela, Colombia, and other countries, have united (with the sponsorship and support of the Lutheran World Federation) in organizing a seminary which, though still small, has an excellent building

and a well-trained international staff including both Europeans and Americans. The Church of the Nazarene, the Salvation Army, and the Seventh-Day Adventists maintain their own training schools, usually making only modest academic requirements of their candidates. In all these schools there are about two hundred young people who are preparing for the full-time ministry of the churches and a good many more who will become active lay workers. The Methodist Church has nearly as many candidates for the ministry as the financial resources of the church will allow it to add to its staff from year to year, but this is not true of most of the other churches, nor indeed of the Methodist Churches in Chile, Peru, and Bolivia, which send their better candidates to Buenos Aires for training.

Several other churches are short on ministerial candidates, and especially those of high quality, although on the whole the candidates who present themselves now are better prepared than those of former years. It is unfortunate that theological education in Argentina is divided among so many schools with relatively meager resources, but this is simply a projection of the divisions which exist among the churches which have established outposts in these fields. There is little hope for more inclusive interdenominational theological training here until the North American churches become less insistent on indoctrinating the younger churches in the ways of the older and on maintaining separations which, though perhaps tolerable in the United States, are tragic in fields like this.

What, now, is the temper of the Protestant churches in Argentina and Uruguay? What is the spirit which prevails among them? First of all, it is a spirit of genuine concern for the evangelistic and missionary outreach of the Church. One cannot deny that there are congregations which become ingrown and self-sufficient, forgetting to express in their own life the missionary passion to which they owe their existence. But this is not typical of the Spanish-speaking churches of the region. Evangelism is a dominant note among the majority of both pastors and laymen. Innumerable congregations have begun in the testimony of enthusiastic laymen who have borne their witness among their acquaintances and invited them into their homes for simple services. The "old-line" churches tend too easily to become absorbed in the smooth running of their denominational machinery or the multiplication of committees, but the younger generation of pastors is conscious of this and seeks to break the bonds of routine in the interest of a more vigorous program of evangelism. The newer churches and the so-called "sects" take very seriously their evangelistic task and are fairly effective in it. Growth of the congregations is not so rapid as in Brazil or

Chile, perhaps due in part to the different kind of people we deal with here, but it is continuous and encouraging. Evangelistic tracts are widely used. The distribution of the Bible increases from year to year. Radio programs are broadcast weekly, or even daily, by several of the churches, and the response is worth while.

The educational and cultural level of the churches is continually rising. In part this is due to improvement in the general educational standards of these two countries, which have the lowest indexes of illiteracy in all Latin America. But in part it is due to the new aspirations which the gospel stirs in the minds and hearts of its followers. The majority of Protestant converts, like those of the early church, come from the lower or lower-middle classes. But, even as in Wesley's day, the converted man becomes sober, honest, and upright, and if indeed his opportunities have been limited, he aspires for better things for his children. The results of this spirit are evident in today's churches, especially in the large number of young people who are students in the professional schools of the universities and in the increasing number of professional men and women in the congregations. It is hard to make converts among university-trained people, but more and more Protestant young people are coming up through the churches and going eventually into professional life, where they bear their witness among their indifferent or Roman Catholic colleagues. Some people complain that the churches are becoming too "bourgeois" and fail to reach the working class. This may be true of some, but in a sense it reflects the change in the level of the church's culture. It is difficult for a given congregation to be in touch with both extremes of the cultural scale, but taking the Protestant movement as a whole it may be said that it is in vital touch with people at both extremes and its general movement is definitely upward.

The churches themselves contribute very definitely to the cultural and spiritual growth of their members. Religious education has an important place in the lives of most of them. Methods and materials have been improved, both denominationally and interdenominationally; and although the graded system is not easily applied in many of the smaller churches, there is genuine concern in every quarter to meet the needs of children and youth. Bible study groups have multiplied. Summer camp programs have been instituted or extended by several churches and are increasingly the centers for training lay leadership. The seminaries and Bible schools extend their work to laymen by means of night classes and correspondence courses. Many churches, especially those with a lay ministry, are fully self-supporting. Others, with a full-time trained ministry, are increasing their gifts year

by year and assuming a larger part of their support. There are denominations in which nearly half the congregations are launched in some kind of building project.

The theological situation in these countries reflects the divergent views of the churches which have taken root here. The pastors of the foreign-speaking churches bring their theologies with them, but have little theological discussion with their Latin-American confreres. The missionaries of the Spanish-speaking churches import their theologies and transmit them to their younger colleagues. The theology of the national churches does not grow up out of their own reflection upon the gospel but out of personal loyalty to the missionary or denomination which began their work. Thus there develops "one of our most serious theological problems, namely, the fruitless continuation of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. . . . This debate, which really does not belong to us but is inherited from others, constitutes the greatest [theological] sin in a mission field, for it divides our forces, sows confusion, and presents our hearers with man-made stumbling-blocks rather than with the truly divine 'scandal' [of the Cross]." ² Such is the judgment of one of our most thoughtful and penetrating young pastors. He calls attention to the new theological influences at work in Latin America since the Second World War, with the spread of the works of Niebuhr, Barth, Brunner, Tillich, Bultmann, Cullmann, and others. The translation of the German authors into English and French makes their works accessible to many Latin-American readers, including a number of interested laymen. ³ A quarterly called *Cuadernos Teológicos*, issued by the faculty of the Union Seminary in Buenos Aires, presents Spanish translations of important articles by foreign authors and offers a mouthpiece for the younger Protestant theologians of South America. Barthian theology can hardly be said to have a large following in these countries, but its influence is likely to grow in the younger generation of Protestant pastors and theologians. It offers them a solution of the fundamentalist-modernist dilemma, a fruitful approach to the theology of the Roman Catholic Church, and a Christocentric message. This positive influence, however, is still to be found only in a small minority of Spanish-speaking pastors. The majority have read little or nothing in neo-orthodox theology and probably hold views of the Bible approaching fundamentalism. This seems to me to be one of the main obstacles in broadening the basis of interdenominational co-operation.

² Emilio E. Castro, "La situación teológica de Latinoamérica y la teología de Karl Barth," *Cuadernos Teológicos* (Buenos Aires), Nos. 18-19, 1956, pp. 6-7.

³ Spanish translations have appeared of some of these writings, viz., Barth's *Outline of Dogmatics*, Brunner's *Our Faith*, and Kierkegaard's *Philosophical Fragments*.

3. Peru

HERBERT MONEY

IF ONE WERE to question almost any evangelical missionary in Peru regarding the growth and expansion of the Christian Church in that republic, his opinion would probably be that the rate of progress was very slow indeed and that every inch of gain had to be contested in the face of opposition and difficulty. The missionary lives in the present and that is how the present looks. He knows little of the past, since the history of the evangelical movement here has yet to be written. Yet, when one takes the trouble to dip up the facts and look back over the road we have come, the picture is much more encouraging and the rate of expansion, though slow, is seen to be steady and much greater than is generally thought.

The gospel was brought to Peru in 1822 by the Rev. James Thompson, a Scotch Baptist, who came at the invitation of the liberator, don José San Martín. The purpose of his coming was the introduction into the newly created republic of popular education, which three hundred years of Romanism and Spanish misrule had done nothing to encourage. Under official patronage he organized the first training college for teachers and set up primary schools on the Lancastrian model, while in a private capacity, as representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society, he introduced the Scriptures and found the demand to be far in excess of the supply. Unfortunately he left Peru in 1824, as he thought for a very brief period, but was never able to return. Prospective missionaries, who visited these shores at different times during the same century, found a very different situation. The tide of liberalism had receded; the hierarchy had regained its control, and ignorance and superstition prevailed once more.

The American Bible Society was responsible for the second serious attempt to bring in the Word of God, when it sent Francisco Penzotti to Callao in 1888. He found the people hungry for the gospel, but such was the opposition of the clergy that before long he found himself in prison. His release in 1891 marked the first victory in the struggle for religious freedom in this land.

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The Methodist Episcopal Church followed hard on Penzotti's heels. In 1891 Dr. Thomas B. Wood took over the congregation founded by the pioneer and the following year opened his first preaching hall in Lima. He organized the first Protestant school in Callao in 1893. In 1904 the Methodist work was extended to the central Andean highlands when Tarma and, somewhat later, Huancayo were occupied.

What is now the largest congregation of the Iglesia Evangelica Peruana grew out of the efforts of Charles Bright, a Plymouth Brother, who arrived in 1893. That same year Messrs. Peters, Jarret, and Stark, missionaries from Harley House, London, arrived and laid the foundations from which the work of the Evangelical Union of South America was to develop. Between 1895 and 1898 the work was extended along the coast to Trujillo, Ica, and Nazca as well as to the ancient city of Cuzco in Southern Peru.

The Holiness Church, now the Pilgrim Holiness Church, was established in Chiclayo in 1903. Three years later the Seventh-Day Adventists began a most remarkable work on the altiplano of Titicaca in the Department of Puno. The Salvation Army entered the field in 1910 in the Lima-Callao area; the Church of the Nazarene established itself alongside the Holiness Church in the north; the Free Church of Scotland sent Dr. John A. Mackay to found what is now the Colegio "San Andres" in Lima in 1917. He supervised the entrance of this mission into the Department of Cajamarca. The Assemblies of God missionaries in 1920 laid the foundations of what is now a flourishing work throughout the country.

When the thirtieth anniversary of the release of Penzotti was celebrated in 1921, there were forty-eight evangelical congregations (excluding the Adventists) in the whole of the republic. These were spread over eleven of the twenty-one departments into which Peru was divided politically, and there were also eleven evangelical primary and secondary schools.

By 1930 four more missions had established themselves. These were the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Inland South American Missionary Union (now the South America Indian Mission), the Plymouth Brethren (1925), and the Irish Baptists (1928). There were at that time 123 missionaries, 31 native workers, and 123 congregations embracing 13 Departments together with 19 primary and secondary schools.

The National Census of 1940 revealed a Protestant block 54,818 strong and representing .88 per cent of the total population of 6,207,967. Some Protestants were registered in all the departments, while in the southern department of Puno, where the Adventists were active, 5.08 per cent of the population declared itself Protestant.

Simultaneously with the National Census an evangelical census was conducted by the National Evangelical Council. This revealed 4,322 members in full communion, together with 6,659 others who had made profession of faith without yet having been received into communion. The total number of believers was 10,981 and the total evangelical community appeared as 22,277. Three hundred and four evangelical congregations and 345 Adventist groups were known to exist at this time.

There are evangelical churches in all departments now, and it is estimated by the National Evangelical Council that church membership is in the vicinity of 18,000. The largest denomination in the country is the Assemblies of God, with the Peruvian Evangelical Church coming second. The Baptists are represented by the Association of Baptists for World Evangelization, the Amazon Baptist Faith Mission, the Irish Baptist Mission, and Mid Missions. The Presbyterian group includes the Bible Presbyterians, the Free Church of Scotland, the indigenous Peruvian Evangelical Church, which is Baptist in doctrine and Presbyterian in government. The Pentecostal group is made up of the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the Prophetic Church of God, the Church of Christ, the Pentecostal Missionary Church and others, with the number of splinter groups continuing to increase. Besides the foregoing there are also the Methodists, the Nazarenes, the Pilgrim Holiness Church, and the Plymouth Brethren. Faith missions are represented by the Child Evangelism Fellowship, the Evangelical Union of South America, the Peru Inland Mission (affiliated with the Regions Beyond Missionary Union), the Peru Interior Mission, and the South America Indian Mission.

Although geographically this work embraces all departments and continues to spread slowly into the remotest provinces into which these are divided, the sociological occupation proceeds at a slower pace. As in the time of our Lord, "the poor have the gospel preached unto them," while "the rich go empty away." The upper and middle classes are not willing to pay the price of ostracism in a society where life is so closely bound up with the official Church and its ceremonies; while the highland Indian population is too ignorant, superstitious, and fanatical to want to inquire into a religion that involves giving up the drunken orgies which in the Andes masquerade in the guise of Romish feasts. The evangelical constituency, therefore, except in Puno, Cuzco, and Loreto, where a strong impact has been made on the Indian population, is made up principally of townspeople of the humbler categories. Among these, however, the power of God unto salvation works as leaven. This is especially so on the cultural level. An

increasing number of young people of humble origin are seeking higher education and professional training. There is already a sprinkling of evangelical doctors, lawyers, teachers, and engineers and, in the election of 1956, the first evangelical deputy was elected to congress. And it is probably not far from the truth to say that the greatest boost he received during the electoral campaign was the vicious attack made on him by the local priest.

Evangelical primary and secondary schools are making some impression on the next higher classes to those reached by the churches. The Methodists have given more attention to this field than any other group. They maintain an excellent secondary school for girls (Colegio Maria Alvarado) in Lima, a highly successful coeducational secondary school (Colegio America del Callao) in Bellavista, a first-rate primary school (Escuela America) in one of the suburbs of the capital, and another good secondary school (Instituto Andino) in Huancayo. The only other evangelical schools of note are the Colegio "San Andres" of Lima, under the auspices of the Free Church of Scotland, and the "Escuela Internacional," which the Evangelical Union of South America maintains in Arequipa. It is thus evident that educational work is not a strong feature in the evangelical program in Peru.

Some attempt has been made at work among university students, but very little was achieved till a North American schoolteacher attending lectures at the historical University of San Marcos organized a group for Bible study along the lines of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions. This effort has met with some measure of success and, in spite of the departure of its founder and moving spirit, still continues to function.

Another factor that may help the evangelical churches to make some more appreciable impact on other levels of society is a general improvement in church buildings and meeting places. In the department of San Martin, for example, the bishop was successful for a considerable time in maintaining such an ascendancy over the prefect of the department that his will was supreme. A decree regulating non-Catholic propaganda was therefore interpreted in such a way as to limit Protestant services to properly constructed ecclesiastical premises. For a time this was a great setback to the believers, who had been accustomed to meet in private houses and rented rooms but, in the long run, it was really a blessing in disguise, since it gave a tremendous impetus to the building program of the church. Where a few years ago services were celebrated in the humblest fashion, the congregations now meet in their own premises, which not only dignify the worship but also grace the appearance of the village or township.

The Church of the Nazarene has erected several beautiful church

buildings in recent years, notably in Lima, Chiclayo, and Piura. In all of these centers the attendance increased notably as soon as the new premises were available. The Peruvian Evangelical Church has a beautiful new building in course of erection in Lima. It is located on one of the principal avenues within two blocks of one of the main plazas and almost directly opposite a fashionable Roman Catholic temple. The architecture is strikingly modern and, besides an auditorium with seating accommodations for one thousand people, there are ample Sunday-school facilities in the basement, the auditorium of which seats another seven hundred. A few years ago it would have been extremely difficult to obtain a building permit from the municipal authorities but those days, happily, are now past. The hierarchy did everything it could to hold up the construction but, since it had no legal basis for its demands, it failed to do anything more than stimulate the interest of the public and "put the church on the map," so to speak. The Methodists have long enjoyed the benefits of good church buildings and the Assemblies of God are paying increasing attention to this matter.

When Penzotti arrived in Peru, Article 4 of the Constitution stated that "the Nation professes the Apostolic Roman Catholic Religion; the State protects it and does not permit the public exercise of any other whatsoever." Although this Article was seen to be rather archaic by the judges, who finally decided Penzotti's case, the Constitution remained unchanged until the late John Ritchie, a veritable missionary statesman if ever there was one, engineered a campaign for the elimination of the words "and does not permit the public exercise of any other whatsoever." In 1916, much to the alarm of the clergy, to whom it now became evident that they had lost their hold on the heart and mind of the people, this amendment was approved by both Congress and Senate. Up till this time it was not possible even for the Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd, which ministers to the English-speaking residents of Lima, to carry its ecclesiastical architecture to the street front. Its premises in Calle Pacae had to be hidden behind a residential façade distinguished only by a brass name plate.

There have been incidents from time to time that could rightly be termed persecution, but there has been no all-out campaign in recent years to eliminate the Protestant faith from Peruvian soil. Here and there, where fanatical priests have stirred up their parishioners to physical violence, nasty incidents have occurred. The pattern of such attacks is fairly uniform. The church bells peal out the emergency call as in the Middle Ages; the mob—for this can only happen where illiteracy and ignorance prevail—

gathers, and after a harangue from the priest is primed up with *aguardiente* and sent to work to beat up the Protestants and destroy their property. When protests are made to the central government, some sort of investigation is usually made, but very seldom is any such excess of priestly enthusiasm punished, even if the local authority is instructed to prevent a repetition of violence.

Pastoral letters condemning Protestant activities and inciting the faithful to action have, within recent years, moved some elements of the clergy to violence, but these outbursts have been of comparatively short duration and have failed to achieve the ends for which they were designed. The reason for this is twofold—the liberal spirit of the Peruvian Constitution on the one hand and on the other the spread of education by the state in formerly neglected areas of the interior. Laws have from time to time been interpreted in a reactionary sense but, before the oncoming tide of popular education and enlightenment, they now tend to be applied in an increasingly liberal spirit.

As an instance of this tendency, I refer to a recent happening in one of the most priest-ridden villages of the Andean highlands. No Protestant missionary had ever been permitted to set foot in this place, and an oath had been taken by the priest to the effect that no one ever would do so. Then, in 1955, a young missionary couple moved in and announced services. The medieval-minded subprefect made an attempt to wield the temporal sword at the bidding of the Church and gave the missionaries fifteen days' notice to make themselves scarce. They immediately withdrew but not with the intention of surrendering the field to the enemy without a fight. Vigorous representations were made to the Ministry of Government in which it was pointed out that the prerogatives of the state were being challenged by the Church. The law said one thing and the Church demanded another. This view prevailed, and redress was speedily obtained. The tables were so completely turned that the one who got fifteen days' notice to evacuate was the subprefect himself, while the missionaries returned to the town with the blessing of the authorities and the promise of adequate police protection. They have not been molested since.

The most objectionable measure on the statute book at present is the Supreme Decree of January 4, 1945, prohibiting non-Catholic propaganda in public places. At first only open-air meetings were forbidden, but it was not long before efforts were made by the clergy in the provinces to have the preamble of the Decree interpreted as having the force of law and forbidding non-Catholic worship in any but properly dedicated church build-

ings. Fanatical local authorities here and there prohibited Sunday schools and even prayer meetings and family worship in private homes. In one department Daily Vacation Bible Schools were suspended under pretext of requiring license from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry did not interpret the law in this way and declared that licenses for such schools were completely unnecessary, but this did not prevent them from being closed down. When abuses in connection with the Supreme Decree were brought to the notice of the Minister of Justice and Public Worship, who at the time was a man of strong clerical sympathies, he admitted the abuses but would not put pen to paper to redress them or curb in any way the unconstitutional power and influence of the hierarchy.

Although it was the present president who, during a former term of office, signed the Decree in question, he has, since assuming office in July of 1956, maintained a decidedly liberal attitude. The Decree has not been abrogated, but there has been no sign of any intention on the part of the government of enforcing it.

Until recent years the idea prevailed in commercial circles that it was bad for business to confess a religion different from the official one. At that time the only non-Spanish-speaking congregations in Lima were the Anglican Church and the Interdenominational Lima Union Church, which held its services in the First Methodist Church. Attendance at both churches was small, except on special occasions such as Armistice Day and Easter Sunday. That situation, however, has changed radically. The Church of the Good Shepherd has moved into a beautiful new building in a suburb of Santa Cruz, while the Union Church has more recently erected in the same suburb a fine social hall and Sunday-school plant and has ambitious plans afoot for the sanctuary. Whereas the services in connection with this church were formerly conducted by missionaries on a voluntary basis, there is now a resident pastor and an average congregation in the vicinity of two hundred, not including the considerable Sunday school which junctions simultaneously with the morning worship service. The German Evangelical Church, with the assistance of the Lutheran World Federation, has erected a fine modern chapel, together with social hall and pastor's residence, and the Greek Orthodox Church also has a temple in the Byzantine style in one of the residential suburbs.

Outside Lima, Protestant services for English-speaking employees are held regularly at the mining camp of Oroya, at a height of 12,500 feet above sea level, and also on the oil fields at Talara in northern Peru. The Lutheran pastor holds periodic services in German for the members of

his flock on the sugar estate at Casa Grande, the mining camp at Oroya, and also at Arequipa.

The training of national workers has received increasing attention during recent years. The Church of the Nazarene and the Pilgrim Holiness Church were first in the field with institutes in or near Chiclayo. The Peruvian Bible Institute was organized in 1933 under the joint auspices of the Evangelical Union of South America, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Free Church of Scotland. In 1946 it was reorganized as an autonomous interdenominational institute, still enjoying the co-operation of the first and last of the above-mentioned bodies and, more recently that of the New Zealand Fellowship of the Peruvian Bible Schools and a North American organization known as the Peruvian Fellowship. It has its own ample premises on the outskirts of Lima and has a very creditable faculty. The student body ranges round thirty-five. The Assemblies of God have a very efficient institute with an enrollment in the vicinity of seventy, situated on one of the industrial avenues toward the port of Callao. The Peru Inland Mission has an elementary Bible school in Lamas and the Association of Baptists a similar institution in Iquitos, though with more pretentious premises. In addition to these, the Christian and Missionary Alliance has a rural institute at Huanuco, where the course embraces three months of instruction each year over a period of three years. Mid Missions have an elementary Bible school in Lima which offers evening classes and the Methodists have this year opened their own institute with an enrollment of six students. It has been found that on the whole workers trained within the country give better results than those trained abroad, hence the tendency for each body to have its own local training school.

The National Evangelical Council of Peru, organized at the end of 1940, embraces the following bodies:

Denominational Missions: Christian and Missionary Alliance; Church of the Nazarene; Free Church of Scotland; Irish Baptist Mission; Methodist Church; Pilgrim Holiness Church.

Faith Missions: Child Evangelism Fellowship; Evangelical Union of South America; South America Indian Mission; Peru Inland Mission; Peruvian Bible Institute.

Indigenous Bodies: Iglesia Evangelica Peruana.

Others: Lima Union Church.

The Council has its office in Lima but has no paid help. Its secretary is supported without cost to the Council by the New Zealand Fellowship of the Peruvian Bible Schools. It is the policy of the Council to cultivate the

unity of the Spirit among the evangelical bodies operating in Peru rather than to seek affiliation with international bodies. Hence relations with bodies like the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches is limited to correspondence and occasional consultation.

There is also a smaller organization of recent origin embracing bodies affiliated with the International Council of Christian Churches. These are the Association of Baptists for World Evangelization, the Bible Presbyterians, and Mid Missions.

Whereas the tendency of the 1940's was toward co-operation and sharing, that of the 1950's seems to be toward division and denominationalism. The root of this separation is not to be found in theological difference, since the missionary organizations operating in Peru are fairly uniform in their conservatism. It stems rather from sectarian and denominational influences in the United States. Peruvian Christians have since the beginning been conscious of a sense of the oneness of the Body of Christ. It is to be deplored that through no fault of their own that sense of oneness should be sacrificed to the sectarian enthusiasm of foreigners and discredit thus brought upon the gospel witness.

A notable development since 1945 has been the establishment in Peru of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, the successor to the Wycliffe Bible Translators. In 1945 this organization signed an agreement with the Peruvian government for the reduction to writing of the dialects of Peruvian Amazonia, the translation of the Scriptures into these tongues, and the provision of primers for bilingual schools, in which the Indians are introduced to literacy in the vernacular. The Summer Institute now has a staff of 180 consecrated and highly specialized workers, including radio and aviation technicians, who maintain regular communications with the furthest-flung outposts of linguistic research in the jungle. Work is going on apace in twenty-nine tribes, one of which already has the whole New Testament available and five, portions of the Scriptures.

The impact of the Word of God on these peoples has been remarkable. Hundreds of primitive Indians have made profession of faith and changed lives testify to the efficacy of the power of God unto salvation. But, with the reduction to writing of the tribal tongue, the preparation of grammars, the translation of the New Testament, the winning of souls, the preparation of textbooks and the organization of bilingual schools, the work of the Summer Institute of Linguistics ends. Not being an ecclesiastical body, it does not seek to organize churches nor would the terms of its agreement with the government be compatible with this. But it certainly provides an

unparalleled opportunity for missionary organizations interested in establishing churches and consolidating the young believers within the Christian fellowship.

At the beginning of this year, with the co-operation of the New Zealand Fellowship of the Peruvian Bible Schools and the Swiss Indian Mission, an experimental Bible Institute for Indians with bilingual school preparation was held at Tournavista, on the Pachitea River. The session lasted three months and in this time remarkable progress was made by all the students, who were literally overjoyed at their emancipation from ignorance concerning God and his Word. The experience gained and the lessons learned in this experimental session will be invaluable to the Swiss Indian Mission as it seeks to develop on a full scale this important work.

In 1953 an agreement was signed between the government and Le Tourneau del Peru, Inc., for the construction of a road connecting the Lima-Pucallpa highway with a colonization project on the Pachitea River a short distance above the Ganzo Azul oil fields. In return for the construction of the road, Le Tourneau del Peru is to receive a concession of 400,000 hectares of forest land for colonization. Tremendous soil-shifting machinery, such has never been seen in Peru before, was moved in and the work begun immediately. An unusual construction camp was set up at Tournavista, where liquor, tobacco, and bad language are conspicuous by their absence and where engineers and technicians, besides being skilled in their specialties, are earnest, God-fearing men. Many of the younger North Americans engaged on the job are Mennonite lads assigned to this project by the draft authorities in lieu of military service. The road is nearing completion, except for a few bridges, and colonists are beginning to arrive. Alongside the American settlement there is a neat little village where Peruvian workers and their families are housed. Services are held regularly in both Spanish and English, and educational facilities include a primary school for Spanish-speaking children and a combined primary and secondary boarding school for missionaries' children, which also takes in as day pupils local English-speaking children. What the future holds for this colony, it is too early to predict, but it is to be hoped that it will develop along the lines laid down by its founders and come to be a center of up-to-date colonization, enlightened citizenship and clear-cut Christian testimony.

Such is the picture of the religious situation in Peru at the moment. The evangelical movement is growing and continually extending its frontiers. However, on the whole it is safe to say that the emphasis on evangelism has overshadowed the building up of the believers in the Word of

God. There are few churches which do not offer some sort of Bible study in their weekly programs but, wherever a service is largely attended, it is considered imperative to conclude with an appeal to the unsaved. The consequence is that edification in the faith and knowledge of the deep things of God is limited to the few who attend the small meeting, while the great bulk of the congregation goes relatively unfed. The correction of this defect is an essential prerequisite of a strong indigenous church. Up to the present it has been thought that the three conditions of such a church were self-propagation, self-government, and self-support. Although none of the foregoing bodies fully measures up to this standard, we must add to the triad yet another requirement—self-edification in the Word of God. To make the church self-edifying must be the primordial task of the future.

The Christian Ideal

The Christian ideal is that every man police his own private life, and be the tribunal of his own conscience. In this fact we find the mysterious power of human uplift which Christianity brought into the world. Jesus set forth the doctrine that conduct depends on the conscience and that on the purification of the latter hangs all morality. Jesus, teacher of souls, clearly defined the limits of the physical life, separating it from the spiritual; and he promised that the kingdom of heaven would come to us if we knew how to realize it in ourselves through love. It seems to be simply a form of egoism to say that we should do unto others as we wish others to do unto us; but it is difficult to practice it. And Christ went beyond that formula, both in doctrine and in practice.¹

¹ Ricardo Rojas (Argentina) in *The Invisible Christ*, translated by W. E. Browning. New York, The Abingdon Press, 1931.

4. Mexico

G. BÁEZ-CAMARGO

IN HIS LATEST REPORT to Congress and to the nation, September 1, 1957, President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines reaffirmed the government's determination to uphold the freedom of conscience and of religion established by the constitution. For the Roman Catholic majority this statement, made at a time when there is no apparent crisis in religious freedom, can only mean one thing—a reiterated assurance that the government intends to maintain the present *modus vivendi* between Church and State, by continuing its policy of not enforcing the laws that place restrictions on certain religious privileges and activities.

Chief among those laws, issued as far back as 1917 and 1935, are the ones preventing churches and religious organizations in general from holding property, establishing, directing, or sponsoring schools and colleges for general education, and conducting public worship outside of church buildings expressly declared for such a purpose. Other laws prohibit the existence and activity of religious orders and limit the full exercise of the office of minister of religion only to Mexicans by birth. In addition, churches and religious bodies are denied recognition of any legal rights or personality.

These laws originated in the traditional opposition between the Roman Catholic Church, long entrenched in the special privileges it enjoyed under the Spanish rule, when it held a spiritual and educational monopoly and a tremendous amount of economic power over the nation, and the liberal, democratic, and progressive governments that wrestled away, bit by bit, that power from the Church. This opposition came twice to a dramatic showdown; once in 1857, when it precipitated a civil war and the establishment of a French- and Church-sponsored imperial regime with Maximilian of Austria, and again under the presidency of General Plutarco Elias Calles, in the twenties, when enforcement of the laws led to an unsuccessful economic boycott and armed rebellion, both inspired by the Church.

It was not until 1940, when General Manuel Avila Camacho, upon assuming the presidency, publicly declared himself to be a "believer" that

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the Church began to enjoy the leniency of the administration. A tacit compromise was reached, the Church ceasing its active opposition to the government and the government easing down the enforcement of the laws. This policy has been continued by the two successors to Avila Camacho. The letter of the law remains unchanged, and every attempt on the part of the Church to have it modified has provoked a violent reaction from the Liberals. The Church is not now so eager to press for changes in the legislation, apparently having contented itself with ignoring them without being disturbed by government action on that score. It seems that on both sides there is extreme caution in not stirring the sleeping dogs again.

Once in a while, the hierarchy issues statements to the effect that the Church, although regretting the existence of restricting laws, is nevertheless satisfied with the *de facto* situation. The government's "religious tolerance" is often commended by the Episcopate. And under the shadow of this religious peace Roman Catholic schools and colleges multiply and flourish openly; foreign-born priests, especially Italian, French, and Spanish, not only increase in numbers but overtly assume charge of regular parishes. Everybody can tell where the "secret" convents and monasteries of religious orders are. Public processions and other acts of public worship take place here and there outdoors, with no interference on the part of the authorities.

Not all, however, is quiet on the political front. In the face of these violations of the laws, Liberals show clear signs, now and again, of growing concern. They are always watching for any indication of the Church's desire or attempt to stage a comeback of its political power. With the presidential elections coming in 1958, early this year the Episcopate issued a pastoral letter summoning Roman Catholics to their civic rights, encouraging them to an active participation in the political life of the country as individuals, stressing their duty to exercise the vote, and directing them to seek the advice of their spiritual guides, particularly in the confessional, on how to use their voting and other citizenship rights in support of the interests of their country and of their Church.

This caused a tremendous uproar from the Liberal side. Prominent Labor leaders denounced the pastoral as a shameless attempt of the hierarchy to control the Catholic vote with political ends in view. Hurriedly rallying in support of the pastoral, two well-known reactionary parties, *Acción Nacional* and the *Sinarquistas*, only made the Episcopate's position more embarrassing. For these two parties have been long accused of being the secular political arms of the Church, which the hierarchy has always

denied. Some Liberals went far enough to demand the immediate prosecution of the bishops on grounds of meddling in politics. The Episcopate retreated. A new statement "explained" first, that it was not and never would be the intention of the Church to intervene in political matters beyond asking Catholics simply to fulfill their duties as good citizens and, second, that no political party had the right to present itself as a Catholic and Church-sponsored organization. Liberals still insist that the pastoral was indeed a trial balloon deliberately sent up by the Church in order to find out how far it could go in the political sphere, and how long the government was willing to stretch its "religious tolerance" toward ecclesiastical activities in that regard.

Finding encouragement in the present *modus vivendi*, there has been in recent years a revival of Roman Catholic fervour and activity. There are frequent processions and pilgrimages to nationally famous shrines. Religious festivals have recovered much of their traditional glamour. Church attendance often overflows the sanctuaries. There are frequent "spiritual exercises" for the various age-groups, and a growing number of lay catechists are being trained and put in charge of the religious instruction of children and youth.

In the field of general education the Church has been given in practice an almost complete freedom. And although according to the laws all schools, including the private, are supposed to be nonreligious, Catholic school buses bearing the name of their institutions are frequently seen stopping in front of the churches to let the children off for religious instruction as a part of the curriculum. These schools and colleges are overwhelmingly staffed by priests and nuns, but they have very able lay Catholic professors on their faculties.

For a time Catholic elementary schools had some trouble in getting the recognition of public-school authorities, mainly because their teachers were nuns lacking the academic background and titles required by law, and because the scale of their nominal salaries was very much below the established standards. The Church had established its own teacher-training centers, but these again failed to meet all the requirements. For a time there was an impasse. In order to avoid a resumption of the Church and State conflict, the government seemed inclined to grant facilities, but at the same time it did not wish to make Catholic schools a too noticeable exception to the pattern under which all private schools are required to operate.

A curious coincidence then occurred. Almost all of a sudden, a vigorous campaign started in Catholic circles against the public schools on the

basis of a double charge. First because they were coeducational, they were "corrupting" the children by making them precociously conscious of sex. Second because, as prescribed by the constitution, religion was left out of them completely, they were "destroying" in the pupils the bases of religious faith and stimulating atheism. Boys and girls, therefore, should be sent to separate schools, and Roman Catholicism, the religion of the majority, should be taught not only in private but also in all public schools. After a while, the campaign stopped almost as suddenly as it had started. Public elementary schools ceased to be coeducational but continued to be non-religious. Catholic schools and colleges received recognition even before completely fulfilling the academic requirements. Those who considered themselves well informed of the inside story whispered that there had been again a compromise—the calling off of the attack on public schools and of the demand to include Catholic indoctrination in their curriculum in exchange for the separation of boys and girls in the elementary grades and the recognition of Catholic educational establishments. But once in a while the firebrands of the Catholic opinion renew the attack on their own initiative.

On the other hand, given this respite, Catholic schools have been steadily improving the training of their teachers by raising the standards of their training institutions and also by sending nuns, disguised as lay-women, to enroll in the government's teachers colleges in order to secure officially recognized titles. The Catholic educational system is therefore now in a stage of full development. When President Ruiz Cortines took possession, the fact was discovered that the preceding administration had been quietly subsidizing some Catholic schools from public funds. Curiously enough, the schools that enjoyed this privilege were precisely among those catering to the well-to-do people and charging very substantial fees. These subsidies were immediately canceled by the new administration, but the incident helped to disclose how far these Catholic establishments had gone in securing the backing of educational authorities.

No noticeable improvement, however, of popular education and morality, or of the spiritual tone of the religious life of the masses, has taken place along with this revival of the activity and influence of Roman Catholicism. It has been mainly a ritual and ceremonial revival, and, the Liberals affirm, a resurgence of the political aspirations of the Church. The hierarchy has been ready to use every available opportunity to receive recognition in public. It has become, for instance, a sort of unofficial protocol for high-ranking visitors from abroad to call on the Archbishop of

Mexico or to pay a visit to the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe as their second visit after paying their respects to the President of the Republic. When the United States Embassy moved to new quarters, the Archbishop was there to bless the building, and he received a warm welcome from the full Embassy staff. Shortly after, the Ambassador sent a flag of the United States of America to be placed at the feet of the image of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

But in spite of all these signs of institutional resurgence, the religion of the people actually continues at a low spiritual ebb. In the way the vast majority of Roman Catholics understand, profess, and practice their beliefs, there is a core of superstition and a mixture of Christian and pagan elements, especially in connection with the festivals, the worship of saints and images, and the pilgrimages, as well as in many details of their everyday life. This is true particularly of the Indian minority. Among the educated people many retain Roman Catholicism more as a social asset than as a deep personal faith. Identifying itself with nationalism and patriotism, Roman Catholicism has become, to all practical effects, a sort of Shintoism.

According to official figures, 96 per cent of the population are Roman Catholics. Some 15 per cent, however, are children under four years, and the estimate for the Indian groups that still live in the darkness of paganism is 7.5 per cent. When these deductions are made, the actual number of professing—not necessarily *practicing*—Roman Catholics comes down to only 73 per cent. In contrast with this numerical strength, the Protestant constituency is estimated as some 450,000, or less than 2 per cent of a total population of 31,000,000.

This number, nevertheless, represents a remarkable progress. For in 1900, with a total population of 14,000,000, Protestants numbered only 50,000. In other words, while the population of the country has merely doubled during the last fifty years, the number of Protestants has grown nine times, and it continues to increase at an accelerated pace. Largest among the traditional denominations are the Baptists, the Methodists, and the Presbyterians. But if the more than twenty independent groups, mostly Pentecostals of various descriptions, are put together, they are by far the largest and the fastest growing movement at the present time. They have become the spearhead of evangelistic advance throughout the territory.

The opposition of the Roman Catholic majority to this steady progress of Protestantism continues. Incidents still occur of active hostility bursting up here and there into violent physical persecution. But on the whole, this violence has been receding during the last ten years or so. In 1945 Arch-

bishop Martinez issued a pastoral summoning all Catholics to defend their faith against the advances of Protestantism. Taking it literally, Catholic fanatics embarked in a violent persecution of Protestants, especially the new groups of converts in isolated towns or rural communities. Churches were set on fire or blown up, pastors and members mobbed and in some cases assassinated. Whole congregations were forcefully expelled from their villages. Federal and state governments did all they could to prevent these acts of terror and to protect the persecuted Protestants, but in most cases their help arrived too late. There was, however, a growing concern on the part of the authorities, and even a few voices among Catholics themselves dared to condemn this violence.

The turning point came when two Federal agents, sent to investigate signs of an impending attack on Protestants in a certain village, were mistaken for ministers by the fanatics, and brutally lynched and mutilated. The Federal government stepped in with all the force of the law. The press, usually silent about the persecution for fear of offending Catholic readers, could not in this case ignore the crime, and the story got out with all of its gruesome details. Some editorials condemned religious intolerance and demanded the prompt punishment of the assaultants. The Archbishop himself felt forced to issue a statement repudiating the use of violence in the defense of the faith and stressing prayer, catechistic instruction, and personal witness as the only methods Catholics should employ in opposing Protestantism.

Ever since, the Roman Catholic hierarchy has been careful not to say anything that might be construed as an encouragement of violence. When Archbishop Martinez passed away and his successor, Monsignor Miranda, issued his first pastoral as new Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico, there was great expectation regarding the customary denunciation of Protestantism. But all references to this subject were missing in his pastoral. He is probably as opposed to Protestant work as his predecessor was, but apparently he does not believe that head-on opposition and fiery condemnations will do the job. Protestants do not believe, however, that under his leadership the Roman Church has by any means let its guard down, nor that the deep-seated fanaticism of the masses has in any way receded. Such persecutory incidents as still occur keep them always on the alert, lest the era of systematic and open persecution may be renewed.

Meanwhile the work of the churches goes on without serious hindrances. New communities are constantly opened to the gospel, and there is more demand for teachers and preachers than the churches are able to meet.

Most of the work is being directed and carried out by the national ministry, and it has taken deep roots in the indigenous soil. But there is a great shortage of ministers and other Christian workers. Their training is also inadequate. The fact that in spite of their scant and deficiently trained leadership the churches have been able to make so much progress is a tribute to their zeal and devotion, but it also reveals the great opportunities that are simply wasted because of the lack of more and better-equipped workers.

As in every country where the churches are relatively young, the Protestant churches in Mexico place a strong evangelistic emphasis on their program. New converts are eager to bring others into the experience they now enjoy. This activity permits fresh advances to take place all along the line. In their evangelistic work the churches rely especially on the distribution of the Bible and on personal work. In 1956 the Mexico Agency of the American Bible Society distributed a total of 42,411 Bibles, 22,656 New Testaments, and 439,300 portions, a rough increase of 30 per cent over the previous year.

But the evangelistic zeal of the Mexican churches is hindered by at least three limitations. First, evangelism is commonly restricted to narrow conventional methods of revivalism. Second, the enthusiasm and sincerity of the leaders lack in discernment regarding the selection and acceptance of evangelists, so that a number of free-lancers with uncertain background have been of late descending upon the country, especially from the United States. Third, the evangelistic program is not comprehensive enough so as to be concerned with the physical, social, cultural, and economic welfare of the people, as well as with the spiritual; or with certain groups that require special approach, such as students, farmers, industrial workers, business clerks, and generally the educated classes.

The educational laws, to which previous reference has been made and which ban religious corporations from the field of general education, were a serious blow to the Protestant school system that once led the nation in educational progress. Most of the schools and colleges had to be closed, some survived, and a few new ones have been opened, but only as private and officially non-religious institutions. This fact curtails their spiritual effectiveness, and since laws also forbid the support of schools by religious bodies, it besets them with difficult financial troubles. The present non-enforcement of the laws in this sphere seems to open a fine opportunity for a re-establishment of Protestant schools and colleges, but so long as those laws exist there is always the risk that a political somersault may bring about their strict application.

Although the churches seem still slow in realizing it, it is perhaps in the field of literacy and literature work that they have practically an unlimited opportunity to contribute to the educational and cultural life of the nation. For not only are there no legal restrictions here to prevent their activity, but in that field the government is ready to welcome and support every effort regardless of whether or not it is undertaken by religious organizations. With the exception perhaps of the Presbyterians in Yucatan, who have definitely included literacy in their official program for field work, and of a recent initiative taken by the Evangelical Council with the backing of the World Literacy and Literature Committee, there is no concerted evangelical endeavor in this regard, such as the one that has been launched in Cuba. And in spite of an energetic literacy campaign undertaken by the Ministry of Public Education some ten years ago, which still goes on to a certain extent, this continues to be a most needy field. At the end of the Spanish rule in 1821, illiteracy was 99.5 per cent. When the Revolution began in 1910, it had already dropped to 72 per cent. It is now somewhere about 40 per cent. But because of the phenomenal growth in population and the slowing down of the official efforts, illiteracy shows a tendency to increase rather than to decrease.

Christian literature has always had an important place in educational and evangelistic work, especially tracts and periodicals. But this is still a very neglected cause from the standpoint of careful planning and improved quality. Most tracts are slovenly translations, poorly printed and often with a controversial overemphasis and the wrong psychological approach. There is a proliferation of small, poorly written and badly printed church periodicals, more in the nature and scope of domestic bulletins than of vehicles of a real evangelistic impact on the unchurched. There are two main evangelical publishing agencies. One is the Presbyterian Publishing House, sponsored by the national church. The other, the Union Publishing House, supported by the Disciples, Methodist, and Presbyterian (U.S. and U.S.A.) missions, is one of the two most active interdenominational literature-producing centers in the whole of Latin America (the other one is "La Aurora," of Buenos Aires). Assisted by the Literature Committee of the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America, these two agencies have reached an average output of a book every week, in editions which range between 2,000 and 5,000, and occasionally 10,000 copies.

In the field of social work there are a few excellent Protestant hospitals, such as the ones in Puebla (Baptist), Chihuahua (Methodist), Morelia (Presbyterian), and Aguascalientes (Disciples of Christ), and a

few small but efficient dispensaries in Mexico City (Presbyterian), Cortazar (Methodist), and Tamazunchale (Mexico Indian Mission). The Presbyterians support a fine student hostel in Mexico City, and the Methodists and the Disciples have been operating social centers in Chihuahua, Monterrey, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosí, and a few other towns. The Union Evangelical Seminary has a Rural Church Department that includes agricultural guidance. The Salvation Army is actively conducting its well-known type of slum work. But on the whole, the Mexican churches have not yet fully awakened to their social responsibilities and opportunities. Practically no attention has been given, for instance, to industrial evangelism, and there are no well-developed agricultural missions yet.

The Indian population has always offered an excellent virgin soil for the planting of the gospel. The Presbyterians in the southeast, and the Pilgrim Holiness Church and the Mexico Indian Mission in the middle east, as well as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (successors to the Wycliffe Translators) in stations scattered all over the country, have given prime attention to Indian work. With the assistance of the Institute, the American Bible Society has recently put in circulation the full New Testament in the Tzeltal dialect (state of Chiapas) in addition to portions in several other dialects. A most striking example of what the gospel can do for the Indian communities is the radical transformation that has taken place in the Oxchuc Tzeltal Tribe (about 4,000 people), of which 50 per cent have become Protestants—with the result that in the entire tribe alcoholism has been practically eradicated, witchcraft is on the decline, delinquency, especially murders, has been greatly reduced, and noticeable progress has been taking place in morality, economic welfare, and citizenship responsibilities.

Even periodical outbursts of persecution and the fact that they all experience the general hostility of the environment have not succeeded in establishing sufficiently close ties of co-operation among all the churches. There is an Evangelical Council in which most of the denominations and a number of important evangelical organizations co-operate, but two of the largest bodies—the Baptists and the Presbyterians—still stand aloof. There are, however, some encouraging signs of a growing unofficial type of co-operation. A National Evangelical Convention meets annually for inspiration and fellowship. A Committee on Evangelical Defense has been constituted to deal with legal matters and instances of persecution. Some evangelistic campaigns of the traditional type have been jointly sponsored by several denominations and groups of laymen from many churches.

An interesting experiment in close co-operation that may eventually lead to some form of church union is being undertaken by the Congregationalists, the Disciples of Christ, and the Associated Reformed Presbyterians. They have established a joint committee which co-ordinates the most important phases of the work of the three bodies and is constantly seeking for new forms of co-operation. They have no prefabricated scheme of church union, but they keep themselves open to the guidance of the Spirit and have expressed their willingness to go as far as He will make them feel they should go.

The ecumenical relationships of the Mexican churches are still thin and remote. The Evangelical Council is affiliated with the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday School Association and with the International Missionary Council, and has had delegates in several important ecumenical conferences. But only one body—the Methodist Church of Mexico—is a member of the World Council of Churches. There is a pioneering Student Christian Movement that is affiliated with the World Student Christian Federation. And the National Union of Christian Women's Societies keeps in close touch with ecumenical women's work, especially in the fields of temperance and literature.

If the present religious situation continues as it is, the outlook of Protestantism in Mexico in spite of its weaknesses—some of which have been mentioned here—is on the whole encouraging, and the progress that has been made, gratifying. Protestantism has a unique message to proclaim and a unique contribution to make to the nation. The churches are faithful, energetic, and devoted. It is hoped that as they grow toward the full awareness of the great vocation and challenge that is theirs, they will become more and more a decisive influence in leading Mexico to a better and more abundant life.

5. The Reformation Comes to Hispanic America

ALBERTO REMBAO

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION of the sixteenth century did not fail in Spain; it was retarded, only to emerge triumphant years later in Spanish America. Never before, throughout the four hundred fifty years of its presence in history, has Protestantism reached such heights of apostolic passion and ecumenical vitality as of today in Hispanic America. From the days of the Reformers in Europe and the Pilgrim Fathers in New England down to the present, history does not register such a phenomenon as the emergence of a Protestant community in twenty countries that have been regarded as Roman Catholic and where until recently Protestantism was considered a "missionary" enterprise initiated and maintained by alien ecclesiastic bodies. In New England, the Protestant faith was brought—"imported," so to speak—from Europe; in Latin America it has sprung from the native soil through a proliferating process in which the missionary endeavor from abroad seems to have been a mere catalytic.

Brazil is, to date, the largest entry on the Protestant record this side of the Atlantic. Even from a purely sociological angle, the birth of a Protestantdom three million strong in a Roman Catholic Republic is out of the ordinary and even astounding, especially since this has occurred in the lapse of two generations. But the case of Brazil is only one of more than half a dozen. In Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico the same phenomenon has occurred, as we shall see further on.

Before entering into specifics it may be well to notice the appearance of certain concrete patterns in the Hispanic Protestant situation which in more than one respect corrode several of the clichés that were in the past thought-fetishes in any discussion of Protestantism. Some accepted ideas should be examined anew: for one, that unconscious principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, which in so far as Hispanic America was concerned would read "to such nationality such religion," whereby the twenty countries to

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the south of the Rio Grande would be Roman Catholic due to the fact that they are Hispanic. If this were so, all Hispanics would be Roman Catholics *qua* Hispanic.

Now it is a fact that no less than five million Hispanics are Protestant. Again one should examine the religion of the immense majority of nominal Catholics. Hispanic America as a whole includes a good 25 per cent of the population that is pure Indian. Recent figures from the "Instituto Indigenista" assert that in Mexico (30,000,000 population) there are 3,500,000 Indians who do not speak Spanish. In the case of the Republic of Peru:

In spite of four centuries of christianization, one can not say that the Peruvian Indian is a conscious member of the Catholic Church, because he lives powerfully his own primitive religious beliefs and magic procedures. It is a case of a very clear *pseudomorph*, where the old (pagan) religion avails itself of the forms of the Catholic cultus. The priests and friars who wrote the chronicles, confession formulas and guides for parish priests since the middle of the sixteenth century on are witnesses to this process. This camouflage was aided by the tactics of placing the Catholic element over the pagan one, as for instance in the construction of the temple of Santo Domingo, in Cuzco, which was built on top the *Intihuasi* or House of the Sun. . . . For the Indians, the Apostle James is their old god *Illapa*, the Thunder. The Catholic Mother of God is for them their *Mamma Pacha*, which is the Earth. The practices of magic have never ceased to be, and they remain today with all vigor in the life of the Indian communities and also in some other social groups. Among them all there is no act of transcendence whatsoever which is not colored by magic.¹

Thus it can be maintained that the twenty countries in question are not wholly Roman Catholic; that there is a strong Indian religion; that there is also a majority of people who though nominally Catholic do not go to Sunday mass; that there is a Protestant minority of some five million souls who practice their own way of life.

Another accepted idea that deserves scrutiny is that of the Protestant minority. We say that the Protestant community is a minority in such countries as Mexico, Chile, Argentina, or Brazil. But in so saying we do not define the majority, and what is more, we assume that the majority is Roman Catholic. Majority in this case means the bulk of the non-Protestant population. In Hispanic America the national population does not coincide with the Roman Catholic constituency; to be, say, a Chilean does not necessarily mean to be a Roman Catholic. Chile has a population of more than six million, of which, according to respectable Roman Catholic sources,² some 681,770, or more than 11 per cent of the total, are Protestant.

¹ Luis E. Valcárcel: *Supervivencias precolombinas en el Perú* (Pre-Columbian Survivals in Perú). América Indígena, México, 1950.

² "Advance of the 'Evangelicals' in Chile," Ignacio Vergara. In *Mensaje*, August, 1955.

On the other hand there is a "Collective Pastoral" issued by the Chilean Episcopate in 1936 in which it is said that "an optimistic estimate would be that hardly 10 per cent of the Chilean population goes to Mass on Sundays and holidays." Therefore in the total population we have an 11 per cent of Protestants who practice their creed and a 10 per cent of Catholics who go to mass on Sundays and holidays. The remaining 79 per cent in Chile—and the same could be said of the rest of Hispanic America—has been described by another Roman Catholic authority, as:

Our people, that immense mass of the baptized ones who would appear in the Census as Roman Catholics, but who live estranged from the Church, an easy prey to any "apostle" of live and palpitating doctrines. . . . And, as long as our people do not find in *Catholicism* that which they find in *Protestantism*, there is no point in talking about *defenses*, or *refutations*, or *offensives*, nor should we yield to the temptation to call on the public power to impede the advance of the sects. . . . [Furthermore] we should take note of the relative facility with which Protestantism transforms its adherents into proselytists.³

In short, nominal religion should be distinguished from practiced religion, and a national population is not equivalent to a religious constituency.

A third accepted stereotype worthy of revision is the idea that Protestantism is being forced into Hispanic America by foreign influences. For instance, last year there appeared among others an essay entitled "Genesis and Stages of the Protestant Penetration in Iberian America."⁴ Its eminent author, Father Prudencio Damboriena, has studied the "Protestant problem" in Hispanic America at large and has come to conclusions that are illuminating in many respects. He says:

Naturally, one must begin by taking into account the silent but tenacious preparatory labors of the missionary societies during a whole century of expansion. While we Catholics went to sleep on our laurels and were reflecting on the depth of their penetration, they were preparing their instruments and infiltrating certain social strata, and making themselves indispensable in such delicate terrains as that of education. On awakening, we come to realize that we have them very much at home among us. . . . Metaphor aside, we stand in South America face to face with Anglo-American Protestantism which means to repeat with its neighbours to the South what its ancestor did to Europe in the sixteenth century. We face a true invasion, systematic and perfectly synchronized and perfectly planned.

However, the records point to an invasion from within rather than from without and Father Damboriena is actually referring to the indigenous spiritual children and grandchildren of the alien missionaries of two and three generations ago. Today the bulk and the spearhead and the *élan* of

³ "Protestantism as a Lesson in Methodology," Victorio M. Bonamín. In *Didascalia*, Rosario, Argentina. Number 6, August, 1956.

⁴ Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos. Madrid. August, 1956.

the Protestant movement down Mexico way is native; the manpower and finances from abroad are insignificant in comparison with the national contributions. Take for instance the Baptist Church in Puerto Rico. In round numbers its annual budget has amounted to some \$200,000, of which only 15 per cent comes from the North. In Cuba, for the same church, last year's budget amounted to \$151,000, of which \$127,000 was contributed by Cubans. Take again the case of the new Pentecostal temple in Rio de Janeiro, recently built when the old one was destroyed by fire. The Pentecostal groups throughout the land dedicated a given Sunday to raise money for the new temple, and in one single day they raised several million *cruceros*. And so on.

The point is that as of 1957, Protestantism in Hispanic America—at any rate in Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Argentina, Mexico, Guatemala—is an indigenous affair; it is a product of the soil. The "invasion" occurred two generations ago; it was the sowing of the seed. It was Paul crossing the Hellespont into Macedonia and the West. At present the problem for our Roman Catholic brethren would be rather to stop the tropical growth of the Evangelical forest. Nowadays there are numberless Protestants in Hispanic America who speak of their religion as "the religion of our fathers and of our grandfathers."

Today the Protestant faith down South is a sociological rather than a theological presence. Consider the change which occurs when somebody appears offering a better religion than the existing one. The examples are there: India under Emperor Asoka abandons the religion of its Hindu tradition and accepts Buddhism; Christianity displaces the old Olympian religion of the Roman Empire; the pre-Columbian American Indians accept the religion of the Conquistadors. In a sense this twentieth-century change of religion in Hispanic America appears to be—in its sociological aspect—even more significant than the other three. There are residues of the Imperial Roman cult in the Christian mass, and of the pre-Hispanic religion among the Catholic Indians of Guatemala and Bolivia and Peru, and understandably so, in view of the stubborn quality of the defeated religion; but in the case of Protestantism taking deep root in Latin America there is the fact that its constituency represents not a politically defeated group but a religiously persecuted one that has prevailed over the majority.

There is still a fourth notion to revise: the commonly accepted one that religion is an ecclesiastic undertaking; that Church is a monopoly of the priests who are the experts and technicians in all things pertaining to mysteries and gods. Not so in those Protestant communities to the South,

where the "Church invisible" has become visible, where the insights of primitive Protestantism have had a new birth of freedom in Jesus Christ our Lord. The old doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers has become flesh among the Latins, who have as a slogan "Every believer a preacher." This attitude explains perhaps what Dr. Bonamín had in mind when he speaks of "the relative facility with which Protestantism transforms its adherents into proselytists." Here we have the core of the fact: every Protestant down South is a proselytist. Please note the qualifying "down South," for in North America the term "proselytize" is a bad word, so to speak, for it is offensive to any minority in a pluralistic society like the United States. But here we are considering Latin America, where the constituency has a sense of commission, where the laymen take upon themselves "holy orders," according to the Scripture: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God."

A fifth point deals not with revision of a given concept but rather with the change of attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward her rebellious children. Until recently the Roman remedy for the Protestant heresy has been medieval, to say the least. The record is full of pastorals and manifestoes where bishops have called on the faithful to stop the advance of Protestantism at any cost. During the last war an effort was made by bishops to coerce the United States government into recognizing the Roman Catholic quality of all Latin-American countries to the effect, among others, that all American ambassadors be Roman Catholic.

As against this technique of metaphorical "sword and fire" it is well to register several very recent dicta from well-authorized Roman Catholic spokesmen. In his "Protestantism as a Lesson of Methodology," already mentioned, Dr. Victorio M. Bonamín asserts that "Catholic pedagogy does not advise to *defend* oneself against Protestantism, nor to *refute* it, nor to *attack* it, but to *excel* it. . . . Protestantism must be excelled in its methods, because in these lies the reason for its proselytistic efficacy. . . . Protestantism knows how to relate the content of the evangelical message to the actual problems of the human being."

In his "Advance of the Evangelicals in Chile," Father Ignacio Vergara recognizes the sincerity, good faith, and evangelical ardor of the Chilean Protestant laymen:

Each one of these convinced, militant leaders lives in a social environment; he is perhaps the head of a family, or one of the elder brothers thereof. In either case it is he who, little by little, keeps on communicating the proper evangelical ideas in his conversations, readings, attitudes, etc. All these will gradually make, imperceptibly, an impression, especially upon persons who are indifferent, or empty, or wavering, as to religion. One should have in mind that the Pentecostal movement has already in its midst third-generation descendants from those who initiated it. Furthermore, the aforementioned militant one will exert his influence upon his ward neighbours. We all know that in an environment of humble people the home is an open place and social life is lived on the street, among the members of his committee or of his football team, or among his shop fellow-workers. We have seen the zeal with which an evangelical propagates his beliefs, at times at the cost of heroic sacrifice. One would have to add to all this the street-corner preaching, the missionary tours, the evangelistic missions in other wards or else among the people of the countryside.

Angel M. Centeno, Jr., in his article "Protestantism in Hispanic America,"⁵ states: "We must face the fact that the North American missionary endeavour in Hispanic America is important, and that our country [Argentina] absorbs a good deal of it; that the effort is not limited to the apostolate among the Indians and Pagans but that it also seeks the conversion of baptized Catholics; and that it attacks our [Roman Catholic] religion rashly; and that the intolerance shown by Protestantism in its preaching is more grave than that shown by Catholicism in its defense." Further on Father Centeno advocates a median, just position between the two possible extremes of "fire and blood" on the one hand and "open door" on the other. He would advise the dissenters to practice their religion in good season: "Let them conduct missions in nonchristian lands; let them perfect their ministry contributing sanely thus to save a materialistic world with their nonfragile dose of sanctity and spirituality. But we reject their sowing doubts among our Catholics; we should impede their propaganda either in Christian surroundings or in places that we are Christianizing."

We have already mentioned the warning against appealing to the public power to stop the Protestant advance. There are more data available to sustain the belief that the Mother Church in Latin America has embarked in a policy of live and let live toward her "lost sheep."

One word should be said by way of fair appraisal of Protestantism as a social force in Latin America, for it is a fact that any religion is not judged by the worth of its theology but rather by the effect that it has on the lives of the common people. Father Damboriena, in another study on the Protestant fact in Chile, will say that "the Pentecostal devout comes to the place of worship, even though a little blindly, to put himself

⁵ *Criterio*, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1956.

in contact with the Deity and to satiate somehow his hunger for God."⁶

So far in this article the records drawn upon have been Roman Catholic. Now it seems plausible to bring forth the testimony of some Latin American non-Catholics. Early this year the Committee on Co-operation in Latin America invited the ambassador from Bolivia, Víctor Andrade, to address it on the economic situation of his country. But at the last minute, His Excellency announced that he would rather avail himself of the occasion to give his personal testimony regarding the influence that a Protestant high school—Instituto Americano, of La Paz—had exerted on his life. During the plastic years of his adolescence and youth, he said, "we learned there the great teachings which are not written in books but on the faces and the hands of the teachers. For instance, the fact that the Principal's wife should wash her own dishes after meals, in a country where labor was cheap. We learned there the spiritual values of evangelical love which translates itself into the good life as to morals and into the democratic style of government as to politics. And now in retrospect I realize that these values are nothing but the Protestant style of life."

This testimony could have been given by all the schoolmates of Dr. Andrade, who happen to be the whole federal government of the Republic of Bolivia. The president, Hernán Siles Zuazo, and many other functionaries are graduates of that Methodist institution, founded fifty years ago when the liberal president General Ismael Montes established freedom of worship in 1906—"thus placing Bolivia on the same level with the most advanced nations of the world." Here is perhaps one clue to the secret of Protestantism's success: When the president of Bolivia and his cabinet were ready for high school, the only good one available in La Paz was the Instituto Americano. In four hundred years of spiritual and educational jurisdiction the Mother Church had not bothered, as now, to cultivate the "delicate field of education."

The Methodist Instituto Americano was opened "at the invitation of the president and of the majority of the national congress." And here we have another clue to the success of the Protestant movement in Latin America: that it came during the high tide of liberal governments, which means that at the time those countries did not have Roman Catholic governments. Thus many mission agencies received the invitation to "come over into Macedonia and help us." General José de San Martín, the liberator of Chile and Peru, invited the Rev. James Thompson, Scottish Baptist, to come to Peru as an educator in 1822. While acting as an agent for

⁶ *El Protestantismo en Chile*. Mensaje. Santiago, Chile. June, 1957.

the British Bible Society Mr. Thompson established the Lancastrian system of education in that country. General Santander invited the Presbyterian Board to send missionaries into Colombia. President Benito Juarez of Mexico befriended the incipient Protestant movement in an effort to create another church which might rival Roman Catholicism, which was deep in politics against the legal government (Bishop Labastida y Davalos acted as chairman of the committee that went to Miramar to offer the throne of Mexico to the Austrian prince Maximilian). During the last third of the nineteenth century President Justo Rufino Barrios proclaimed freedom of worship in Guatemala, and in Venezuela President Antonio Guzman Blanco did the same, thus opening the country to Protestant missionaries.

Other Protestant testimony comes from the men of science, who look at religion from above, so to speak, as one among many observable phenomena. Take for example the monumental *Brazilian Culture*, by Fernando de Azevedo, translated into English by William Rex Crawford, with statements such as this:

The American schools introduced into the country in the early days of the Republic at a time when public instruction was still very retarded, made a notable contribution in Sao Paulo in the change of methods and the intensifying of teaching. The Protestants founded great colleges like Mackenzie in Sao Paulo, Granberry Institute in Juiz de Fora, Gamon Institute in Minas, and the Evangelical High Schools of Bahia and Pernambuco. They gave stimulus to didactic literature which was enriched by works of the first order at that time, such as the grammars of Julio Ribeiro and Eduardo Carlos Pereira, the arithmetic and algebra of Antonio Trajano, the works of Otoniel Mota and the Readers of Erasmo Braga; they made an efficacious contribution to the spread of popular education through their system of Sunday Schools, the number of which reached in 1934 to 3,912, spread with their approximately 15,000 official teachers over the large field of action within the reach of the churches. In proportion as its members multiplied as a result of pastoral work—in which there stand out important figures like Alvaro Reis (1896-1925) and Erasmo Braga (1877-1930)—Protestantism developed and enlarged its social activity, creating hospitals, day nurseries and orphanages. . . . There is not the slightest doubt that the sphere of Protestantism has grown and its work multiplied, not only as to its religious activity but also as to the educational and social side. . . . In 1935 there were already 1,500,000 persons under the sway of the Evangelical churches.⁷

Of course these figures are thirty years old. In Brazil in 1930 Protestants were 1.31 per cent of the population; in 1940, 2.61 per cent; in 1950, 3.3 per cent.

Finally, there is the testimony of the lay press. The most recent notice

⁷ Fernando de Azevedo: *Brazilian Culture*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950, pp. 157, 158.

comes from Guatemala, and it refers to the Presbyterian Diamond Jubilee⁸ celebrated in Guatemala City during the first week of May, 1957. I have before me clippings from the daily *La Hora* and the weekly *El Liberal*. They mention a "surprising Evangelical manifestation," or parade. "The first thing that astounded us was the number of Protestants assembled. . . . We expected a parade some five or six blocks long. But there were ten blocks already, and another ten, and still another. . . . We tried to make an estimate of the marchers. There must have been between 80,000 and 100,000 [*La Hora* counted only 50,000]. But more surprising still was the kind of people that marched. There were many professionals, many workers, and many of those whom we designate here as common people. There were uniformed boys and girls from several Protestant schools. There were Indians from the countryside who had even come on foot to take part in the parade. . . . The good order of the march was splendid: no bad words, only the singing of hymns." The writer ends his story advising the civil and church authorities, "and the politicians also," to take note of the tremendous strength of Protestantism.

Guatemala has a population of 3,263,000 (1955 estimate), out of which at least 50,000 came to town on May 5, 1957, to celebrate an anniversary. One cannot know how many did not come who wanted to, especially from the more distant districts. We know that some of the local brethren abstained from participating due to unmentionable reasons. In any event, Guatemala now ranks as to Protestant percentages with Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru. By the law of averages, which seems to hold, the 5,000,000 total for all Protestant Latin America should be revised—upwards.

⁸ The Presbyterian Board came into Guatemala at the special, personal invitation of President Justo Rufino Barrios.

The Church Is Christ's Body

JOHN KNOX

A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT in Protestant theology in the last few decades, at any rate in this country, has been a greatly enhanced appreciation of the church. This importance is best expressed, I believe, in the familiar affirmation that the church is the body of Christ. I would take this assertion as more than a mere metaphor intended to convey that Christ used the church or uses the church as one uses an agent or an instrument. By "body" we ordinarily mean the spatial-temporal locus of personal existence and the medium of its expression; and when we speak of the church as the body of Christ, we are using the term, I think, in just that sense. Christ is actually embodied in the church. The phrase thus says something definitive not only about the church but also about Christ. The church is not one of his bodies, or a part of his body. It *is* his body. Not only is he known there; he can be known only there. This means that we can know nothing that is distinctly Christian except in or through the church. Indeed, we can go further than this and say that nothing such exists.

I

Now this statement of the importance of the church may seem to some excessively strong; and perhaps we should pay some attention to objections which may be made to it. Someone says, "What about God's reality? Surely that is important to the Christian. And who would claim that it can be known only within the church, much less that God exists only there?" Put so, the question is capable only of the expected answer. But suppose we are asking the question, as I believe we usually are, not about God in some very general sense but about "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Must we not recognize that this reality is known only within the church? How, indeed, could it be known anywhere else? It is by definition a historically revealed reality—that is, a reality that became known in a historical event, the coming of Christ, or in the course of a

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historical development which culminated in that event. This is not to say, I repeat, that God can be known only as *revealed* in this history, or even that He can be best known there (although we may believe this), but simply that He is differently or distinctively known there. He is known there as He is known nowhere else, and when we refer to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" we are referring to God as thus known.

"But," the objector may continue, "granted the particularity and concreteness of this revelation of God, that it occurred in and through a unique event, surely you cannot affirm that this event can be known—much less that it occurred—only within the church." Yet this is precisely what can be, and must be, affirmed. To be sure, something happened in Palestine in the middle part of the first century which was a matter of general notice and perhaps of public record. The historical career of Jesus ending in his crucifixion under Pontius Pilate is a fact beyond any possible denial. But although this career occurred—and it is important for us to recognize that it did—it can hardly, simply as such, be called a historical event, if by that term we mean an incident with important historical consequences. The career of Jesus is certainly not such an event in Jewish history or in Roman; it is such an event only in Hebrew-Christian history. Even those who question this statement will not deny that only in that history is it the particular event it is. The career of Jesus, merely as such, is not the event central to Christian faith any more than the God who is manifested in nature or in history as a whole or in mystical contemplation is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. *This* God can be known only through a particular historical event; and *this* event can be known only through the experience of a particular historical community. Indeed, it took place only there.

This intimate and integral involvement within the very existence of an event of the meanings found in it by those among whom or to whom it occurs is familiar in our common life and could be endlessly illustrated. How often it happens that an incident, trivial and negligible in common regard, is for some one person a profoundly significant crisis, a veritable turning point in his career. Something happened publicly, yes—the whole neighborhood knew about it—but *the event* happened only to him! Or perhaps it is an experience within a family. The death of a child, let us say, has the effect of creating an entirely new spirit in a family, of binding its members together in a new unity, of revealing to them a new depth of meaning in the whole of life. The child's death is in one sense a public occurrence—a record is made of it on the city's register, and notice of

various kinds is taken of it by neighbors and friends. But nowhere else is the death the revealing, transforming, perhaps even redeeming, event it is for the family itself. It would be quite impossible in any such case for an analyst, inside the family or outside, to identify clearly or exhaustively the reasons why this incident should have been for these persons just the event it was. Almost certainly he would cite the character of the child as he was intimately known within the family circle, various poignant memories of him shared by the group, the love which had been felt for him, the hopes which had been wrapped up in him. Equally surely reference would be made to various elements in the general family situation, particularly at just the time when the child's death occurred. But the analysis would never be fully successful. Certainly those to whom the event occurred would not find it so. And one must finally be content with saying that at a crucial moment in the life of this family—"in the fullness of time"—an incident occurred which, for reasons we cannot fully discern or understand, had meanings and effects for the members of the family so unique in degree and kind that an event can be said to have happened there which occurred nowhere else.

In the same way, the event of which the Christian speaks occurred only in the church and can be known only through a sharing of the church's experience of it. If that event was the saving event, then the salvation can be realized only through participation in the community's life. In this sense, Cyprian was right: *Salus extra ecclesiam non est*. Christ can be known only there. In other words, the church is Christ's body.

By way of illustrating and clarifying this truth may I speak briefly of the human life of Jesus, the resurrection, and the atoning work of Christ.

II

First, then, let us consider what we often refer to as the historical Jesus. I mean the man Jesus, the incidents of his career, his ideas and words, and so forth. As Schweitzer and others have reminded us, a great deal of research has been applied to recovering what are called the original facts—that is, the facts in the most objective sense, apart from all the meanings and values found in them. I would not for a moment say that such research has been wasted or has served no good purpose. It has been most useful, even indispensable, especially in apologetic. It is doubtful however that it has served, except indirectly, any important confessional purpose. For Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus as a human being, in so far as he has any importance for Christian faith, is a memory of the church. We will

not say "only a memory," any more than the family we were talking about a moment ago will refer to the deceased child as "only a memory." In both cases the person in the past is very real and very important; but he exists as someone remembered, however creative and significant the memory may be. One way of describing the church is to say that it is the community which remembers Jesus; but one can equally truly define Jesus (in the only really significant sense of that name) as the one who is remembered. It is only as he is remembered that he has significance for either Christian theology or Christian devotion. Moreover, it is only thus that he can be recovered with any firmness or assurance. In so far as New Testament research is concerned with clarifying the primitive church's memory of Jesus, it is doing something which is profoundly relevant to Christian faith; but in so far as it is seeking to get behind this memory, it is undertaking what cannot be satisfactorily accomplished and would not be of much significance if it could. In other words, the human career of Jesus, in so far as it is an element in the revealing event, is a memory of the church.

And although the reminder is probably not necessary, it will be safer to point out that we cannot think of the New Testament as providing us with an extraecclesiastical source for the so-called historical Jesus, or indeed for anything else. If the only surviving memory of Jesus is the church's memory, the New Testament, which attempts (among other things) to record that memory, is even more obviously the church's book. Its several documents were written straight out of the church's experience, to meet the church's needs. The New Testament does not provide us with a place to stand outside the church; on the contrary, it draws us more deeply into the church. It does not bring us what happened in some purely objective sense (as though that would be possible anyhow), but what was remembered, understood, realized to have happened by those among whom the event first occurred. To be sure, the New Testament does serve as a check upon, as well as a resource for, the life of the church in every age, but this is because it speaks to us out of the life of the church in its first, and in some ways most authentic, age—not because it has a position outside of the church, or even alongside the church, in any sense or degree whatever. The New Testament is a church book; the church wrote it, and only the church can read it.

This is not to make an embarrassing admission about the New Testament, as though we needed to isolate and exclude the contribution of early Christian life and faith in order to get back to the "real facts." If the New

Testament had not been written from the point of view of this faith, by men and women who deeply shared it, whatever else it might have done, it would not have recorded the event. It might conceivably have brought us a more accurate diagram of Jesus' career; it would not have brought us the reality of Jesus the Christ. For the meaning of Jesus' career which alone makes it important, either for history or for us, is a meaning which was realized, and by definition can be realized, only within the church. This is certainly one of the meanings of the church as the body of Christ. It embodies—and it alone embodies—the memory of the career as creative event.

III

When we turn our attention to the resurrection, it is even more manifest that we are dealing with a reality known only within the new community. The New Testament itself consistently represents it as being unreal, incredible—indeed, nonsense—to those outside. If the empty tomb was found and became an element in the most primitive tradition, it was only disciples of Jesus who found it. If appearances of the risen Christ occurred—and we can be very sure they did—it was only those who believed in him or were ready to believe in him who saw him. But the resurrection faith has a much firmer and broader base than such incidents—at best isolated experiences of a few persons—are able to provide. It rests upon the whole experience of the whole church and is indeed an implication of its very existence. For the church is essentially a community of memory and the Spirit, and at its very heart is the realization of continuity and identity between the two. The one remembered is not remembered only; he is alive and present. Indeed his living presence, known also as the Spirit, constitutes the distinctive being of the church, identifying it as the very community it is and differentiating it from all others.

It would not be true to say that the church arose in consequence of the resurrection, as though the latter were first known to have happened and this knowledge then led to the creation of the church. Indeed, if by "the resurrection" we mean merely an incident—that is, something that happened in Joseph's garden three days after the crucifixion—then it would be more nearly true to say that the resurrection could be affirmed only because the church was already in existence. Understood in this way, the resurrection is only an inference from the essential being of the church: since Christ was known to have died and was now known as living, he must have risen from the dead. The inferential character of this belief is all the New Testament itself claims for it. It speaks, to be sure, of "witnesses of

the resurrection," but it tells of no one who actually *saw* it. The "witnesses" are those who have known Jesus in his human life and have also known him as living after his passion, and who therefore infer the incident of his rising. But "the resurrection," as that term is used in the New Testament and indeed in Christian devotional writing ever since, means more than an incident in the past. The church affirms the resurrection because its own existence as the community of memory and the Spirit is the essential and continuing meaning of the resurrection.

We sometimes speak of the event as culminating in the resurrection; but we are just as likely to speak of it as culminating in the coming of the Spirit or in the creation of the church. This is not to speak of three things, but of one. Easter and Whitsunday do not celebrate two moments, but one only—the moment when those who remembered Jesus were formed into a community in which he was known as present and living Spirit. To belong to this community is to know him and the power of his resurrection. To know him and the power of his resurrection is to belong to this community. This is not to deny or to depreciate the resurrection—far from it. It is to recognize and affirm the divine origin of the church. The church is the body of Christ: it embodies—and so far as history and our experience are concerned, it alone embodies—the resurrection life.

IV

To say this is to come near to making our third point: namely, that the church is the embodiment of the work of Christ. In a recent publication¹ I ventured to say that the sole residuum in history of the event was the church; that the only difference between the world before the event and the world afterward was that the church was now in existence. Some of my friends have taken me severely to task for such a statement. And yet they have not by any means convinced me that it is not true. What do we think of God as accomplishing through the event? Or, to put the question in the traditional way, what was the "work" of Christ? Would it be fair to say that we think of Christ as revealing (in the sense of actually bringing to us) the love of God; as atoning for sin; as giving us a new commandment, that is, a new ethic; as providing the Spirit, in whose power alone the new way can be followed; as setting before us a new and better hope? Is it not in some such way that we would describe the "work" of Christ, the purpose and issue of God's action in him? But why do we describe his "work" just so, and how can we be sure that it is a true description? Is not

¹ *The Early Church and the Coming Great Church*. New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1955.

the answer clear and unavoidable? We describe it so because we have found it so. There could be no other reason. There is no other conceivable ground for any description of the "work" of Christ than the church's experience. Needless to say, this does not mean that the effects of Christ's "work" do not go incalculably beyond anything we can now experience or even imagine. But the necessary ground of any judgment of ours about these eschatological consequences is what is given us here and now. The only basis for any belief as to what God meant to accomplish in Christ is what He did accomplish; and the only basis for any belief as to what he did accomplish is what we see and know.

And what do we "see and know" beyond what is involved in the creation of the church? As sharers in that new creation, participants in its life, we find ourselves actually sharing, however imperfectly, in *agape*; we find our estrangements and hostilities actually being overcome, that is, we find atonement or reconciliation; we actually have communion in the Spirit, the divine breath of the new creation; we actually find ourselves under a new commandment, the commandment of that same love which God has poured into our hearts; and we find ourselves looking forward with assurance to the fulfillment of what God has begun in us and among us. It is only because these things are actually true for us—given to us with membership in the church, indeed constituting such membership (if by membership we mean a real participation or sharing and not something merely mechanical or external)—it is only on this account that we attribute the significance we do to the event. Our description of the work of Christ is a description of what is actually given to us as either reality or promise in the church. Love, atonement, reconciliation, Spirit—these terms all stand for the same reality, God's gift in Christ and the essential principle of the new creation.

The Christian ethic, in its distinctive character and force, is a manifestation of this same principle. The new commandment is not simply love in some general sense. If it were, it would not be a new commandment. For the requirement of love was to be found in Judaism and, indeed, in other ancient religions and ethical systems. No, we are to love one another *as Christ has loved us*. In other words the love—so different that the Christians used a virtually new word for it, which God had poured out in Christ and which was the very heart, the essential Spirit, of the new community—this love must be expressed in our relations with one another and, as far as possible, with all men.

So also the Christian hope, in its distinctiveness is firmly based upon the actual experience of the church. It consists in the conviction that what

God has begun in and among us He will complete. The writer to the Ephesians points to this empirical basis of hope when he speaks of the Spirit as the "earnest of our inheritance." And Paul bases our assurance that our hope will not be disappointed in the fact that the love of God has already been poured into our hearts and, what is the same thing, the Spirit has already been given. But the pouring out of His love and the giving of His Spirit are only other ways of referring to the creation of the church.

V

I have been stating what may appear to be a very "high" view of the church. And indeed if by "high" we mean not a particular way of identifying the church or of defining what is essential to it but a way of understanding the importance of the church both for Christian life and Christian thought, then I should say that our view could not be too high. The consideration of the church is properly not the final chapter in the book of Christian theology—the position usually given it. It is properly the first chapter—if indeed it is not the entire book, since all Christian doctrines, in so far as they are distinctively Christian, are simply efforts to explicate the church's existence and the realities disclosed to us in it. I do not doubt my statement has raised questions, and perhaps I may be permitted to anticipate two of these. The first was touched on at the beginning of this essay: whether in emphasizing as I have done the importance of the church, I have not neglected the transcendent, the supra-historical, the eschatological element in Christianity. And the second is whether I have not ignored the significance of the individual Christian and his experience.

There is not space for an adequate discussion of the topics suggested by these queries, but may I say with the greatest vigor that no conception of the church which really involved either, not to say both, of these consequences could be tolerated for a moment. The reality of God is certainly not enclosed within the church; it is not enclosed at all. He is the God of heaven and earth, of all nature and all history, and of the infinity beyond both. When we speak of "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," we are of course speaking of this God. But it must be said again that although this is true and has been taken for granted in all I have said, we could not have come to know Him as such from observing either the starry heavens, the human story, or the human heart. We know Him as such, as indeed we constantly say, only through Christ—which means that we know Him as such through a particular historical person and the event which happened around that person, both of which (that is, person and

event) actually exist for us only within the church. When we say that the church is the body of Christ, we think of ourselves as saying something enlarging and exalting about the church, and so we are; but we should recognize that we are also saying something in a real sense limiting and humbling about Christ. In so far as he can be known, he can be known only there. This does not mean that we think of him as confined to his body. Do we indeed think of persons generally as confined to their bodies? Do we not think of them as in some sense transcendent? Actually, however, we think of Christ as transcendent in a special sense. We find ourselves speaking of him and addressing him as sitting at the right hand of God in heavenly places, and we expect to see him there. But we actually know him, not there but here; not outside history and the body but within history and the body. Our bodies, in any spatial or temporal sense, end without histories. His did not. And so we have the resurrection and the church.

As for the Christian man, a true view of the church must enhance, not discount, the significance of his experience. My sole point in this connection is that the Christian man is such only in virtue of his participation in the divine reality of the church's life. The Christian life is a *koinonia*. Being a Christian is being a sharer, a participant. The reality in which the Christian shares is a reality in which others also share, and is just the reality it is only because this is true. One may perhaps be religious in one's solitariness. But one cannot be a Christian so. We are familiar with the promise of Christ that where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he also will be. We usually take this to mean that we do not need to be more than two or three; but is it not at least suggested that we must not be fewer—that is, that there must be some “togetherness” if we are to know Christ? This does not of course rule out individual Christian worship—in one sense all worship must be individual—or deny the obvious fact that what we call Christianity is largely in men's hearts. But what is in their hearts is there because they share in a common life; and the reality they worship as individuals is a reality whom they have come to know only in association with others. Even in our private prayers we are likely to say “Our Father.” We know ourselves to stand as individuals before God, but the God before whom we thus stand is the God who revealed himself in a communal event and continues to reveal Himself to us in the communal existence in which that event is both remembered and, in a sense, perpetually recurrent. We are not less truly individuals, or less free, for sharing in so rich a common life.

The Problem of Miracle

RUDOLF BULTMANN

IN THE CONCEPT OF MIRACLE there are combined two separate and diverse ideas: (1) a miracle is an *act of God* (of the Deity or of gods) as distinguished from an event which derives from natural causes or from human volition or activity; (2) a miracle is a *marvelous event contra naturam*, nature being conceived as an ordered system of events proceeding according to law.

Thus the idea of miracle may be distorted in either one of two directions. On the one hand, based on a falsely understood concept of omnipotence, every secular event may be interpreted as an act of God, with the result that the distinction between a secular event and an act of God is surrendered. Or on the other hand, miracle may be taken to mean nothing more than a supernatural or contra-natural event which is indeed attributed to God, but in such a way that God is conceived as mere supernatural agent, without the event itself being understood as God's act; in this case only the idea of miracle is left. In theological discussion these two concepts have often been played off against each other, whereas in point of fact it is only as they are held in strict connection, each with the other, that they constitute the idea of miracle.

I. THE DEMOLITION OF THE IDEA OF MIRACLE AS AN EVENT CONTRA NATURAM

The idea of miracle as an event "contrary to nature" has become impossible for us today because we understand natural events in terms of natural law, that is, we think of miracle as an infraction of the laws of nature; and such an idea we can no longer entertain. This is the case, not because such an event would contradict all experience, but because the very idea of law, which for us is necessarily involved in our idea of nature, is not a

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demonstrated idea but a presupposed one, and because we cannot free ourselves from this presupposition simply by choosing to do so.

The concept of "nature" as process subject to law lies explicitly or implicitly behind all our thinking and acting with reference to the world. This is not just one possible way of interpreting or explaining or viewing the world (a *Weltanschauung*); on the contrary, it is *given with our existence in the world*. We always act in such a way as to indicate our confidence in the orderly processes of nature; and, indeed, when we act responsibly we do not reckon with the possibility that God might set aside the law of gravity, and so forth. "The simple decision to work involves the idea that the things with which we work, in their origin and activity, are subject to laws which our thinking can master."¹ Our intercourse with others, when we seek to demonstrate anything to them or summon them to action, and so forth, presupposes this idea of process as subject to law. We acknowledge as real only that in the world which can be integrated into such a context of law, and regard as fantasies assertions which do not permit themselves to be controlled by this idea.²

The idea of the continuity of nature or of nature as uniformly subject to law is not, indeed, new to modern science, but, since it belongs to human existence as such, is an altogether primordial idea which has only been radically thought through and exploited in modern scientific thought. This is obvious from the fact that on the primitive level the idea of causality is applied even to the idea of miracle. The miracle is attributed to a cause other than that of the everyday occurrence, over which man has control and which he manipulates to his own needs and purposes. The miracle is brought about by a cause which—immediately, at least—he does not know. The idea of two competing causalities is not really thinkable; certainly, it is not what is here thought. Rather, when the divine activity is thought of as expressing itself in the form of a higher causality, God, is simply thought of as a man who knows more and can do more than other men; if others (e.g., magicians) can only discover the secret, they can do it, too.

Furthermore, the historical development of the miracle-concept was such that, more and more, events which at first seemed to be supernatural came to be understood as natural. The idea of events as subject to law,

¹ Hermann, W., *Offenbarung und Wunder*, 1908, p. 36 f.

² A proof of this is unintentionally furnished by the defenders of miracle when they try to prove that a miracle has occurred. For they can do this only by showing it to be necessary (even if a necessary "x") in a particular context. They are connecting the "miracle" directly with secular events when they claim that this or that occurrence is not intelligible without a miracle, or that accurate observation of the occurrence in question leads directly to that "x" designated as miracle. That is, they are making the "miracle" subject to the idea of the uniformity of law and by doing so are really canceling out the idea of miracle.

which was always implicitly present in the notion of everyday regularity, came to be more radically developed. Along with this, the idea of miracle as an event *contra naturam* was also more radically thought through. But at the same time, the impossibility of conceiving of an event described as *contra naturam* as being real became ever clearer.

Thus the very idea of miracle in the sense of an event contrary to nature has become untenable and *must be abandoned*. But further, this must take place because as such the idea has nothing to do with faith; it is a purely formal idea. As is well known, miracles may be helpful or harmful, desired or feared. As there is black magic and white magic, so miracles may be performed by Satan or by God, by magicians or by prophets. The "higher" causality may be divine or demonic, and so far as the specific miracle is concerned, one cannot tell whether it is to be attributed to God or to the devil. One must already know God in order to be certain; one must have a criterion in order to know whether any particular miracle originates in God or not. But this is to concede that if one understands by miracle an event as "contrary to nature" he has already given up the idea of the act of God which is inherent in miracle properly understood.

Thus Christian faith appears not to be interested in miracle as event *contra naturam*; on the contrary it has reason to reject the very idea. Nor can it be urged in reply that *in the Bible itself* events are narrated which obviously must be designated as miracles of this sort. For even if such is the case, criticism must be applied to show both that, in accord with the presuppositions of their ways of thinking, the biblical writers did not discern the full import of this concept of miracle, and that nevertheless the authority of Scripture is not surrendered with the surrender of the idea of miracle understood as an event contrary to nature. What this means can only be more transparent when the idea of miracle as an act of God has been clarified.

II. THE DEMOLITION OF THE PANTHEISTIC CONCEPT OF MIRACLE

Now, another problem presents itself. Without doubt faith is concerned with miracles to the extent that a miracle means an *act of God* in contrast to a natural event. The questions then arise as to *whether such a concept of miracle does not imply that of miracle as an event contrary to nature*, and whether, if the concept of miracle in the latter sense is surrendered the concept of miracle in the former sense is not inevitably surrendered with it. At any rate, just to prevent this is the motive for holding fast to miracle as an event *contra naturam*. Miracle in this latter

sense serves only one function: it designates the event in question as no natural event, and in this way appears to satisfy the demand that miracle shall be an act of God. And the question is, can the concept of miracle as an act of God be maintained if the concept of miracle as an event *contra naturam* is surrendered?

A common solution to this problem is that when the concept of miracle as event *contra naturam* is abandoned, the concept of miracle as an act of God in contrast to a natural event is also abandoned, and then by recourse to the doctrine of creation it is asserted that *every natural event is a miracle*. "Miracle" then becomes "the religious term for event" (Schleiermacher). "This religious concept of miracle has nothing to do with contradiction of natural laws. The natural laws are for God the forms and means in which his activity manifests itself."³ This idea is suspiciously close to the Catholic idea, according to which God as *prima causa* can use the *causae secundae* at will. Yet, this idea is no longer possible for anyone who has radically thought through the idea of nature and natural law. If the essential characteristic of the idea of miracle is that it signifies an act of God as over against a natural event, and if for us a natural event is conceivable only as subject to law, then *the idea of miracle stands in absolute contradiction to the idea of nature*, and I cancel out the very idea of nature when I speak of miracle.

The doctrine of creation does not help here at all. It, too, plainly cancels out the idea that nature is subject to law. For according to this latter point of view, nature is understood as infinite in space and time. The doctrine of creation conceives of it as having beginning and end. If, then, one applies the ideas of creation and miracle to this infinite system of occurrence which we call nature, in reality one repudiates it. If every event is miraculous, then in reality none is, and God and nature are identified. Then God, creation and miracle are only edifying terms for phenomena which meet me quite otherwise in real life, namely, as an unbroken continuum open to scientific investigation, or as nature and as natural events.

Such a pantheistic dissolution of the idea of miracle fails to recognize two things: (1) *The doctrine of creation and of divine omnipotence is not a scientific axiom*, in the light of which every natural event is to be investigated. It is not a rational, generally applicable proposition which can be perceived or believed and then possessed. As a faith-concept it differs from a scientific concept, not in the sense that one arrives at it by some special nonrational method, or that it has a different origin (so far as origin is

³ Schuster, *Herm.*, *Lebenskunde*, II, 1927, p. 8.

understood as cause and thus as a fact of the past), but in the sense that, unlike a scientific concept, it cannot be possessed, exploited and appropriated for use. It can only be acquired over and over again; it can never be separated from its origin in faith but it always has this origin present in itself; it is always true only as it comes into being.

But this means that when I become involved in this faith-concept, I cannot leave my own existence out of account and understand or "explain" something outside of myself as God's creation or act; rather, I am declaring something in the first instance about myself. Yet, this is about myself not as I think of myself objectively as an existent phenomenon, but as I speak of my concrete existence here and now. I can speak of God's creative act only if I now know that I am God's creature. And this means, among other things, that since by definition God's creation is good, that I know myself to be good, to be without sin. But obviously this is something I simply cannot know at all, and neither am I in the least accustomed to behave as if I did. On the contrary, by and large I behave as if I myself were the Creator. In my everyday work, in my use of my time, and so forth, I regard the world as standing within my control. The world along with my activity in it seems essentially godless. Perhaps I can say that I *ought* to see the whole world as the creation of God, that every event or act *ought* to be a miracle. But actually I do not find myself in a situation which makes it possible for me to confirm this.

Thus it becomes clear (2) that the view analyzed above misapprehends *the idea of world*. For, if "miracle" means an act of God in contrast to the natural occurrence which includes my own activity, then by the same token, it gives expression to a particular understanding of the world. By world it does not mean primarily nature as the law-abiding continuum of all occurrence, but the actuality in which I live, *my world*. The idea of God and his activity is primarily orientated to my life, to my existence, to the recognition of the fact that this existence is of itself godless and is one in which I can neither find God nor see him. It attests that I can see God only when he shows himself to me by his act, and that I have no right to interpret him in terms of my own personal predilections or insist that he conduct himself according to my preferences.

III. MIRACLE AS AN ACT OF GOD

1. *Its Hiddenness.*

First of all, then, it is clear that faith is directed toward miracle as an act of God in distinction from a natural event, that faith can be grounded

in miracle, and, indeed, that *faith in God and in miracle mean exactly the same thing.*

Just as the possibility of a pantheistic concept of miracle is hereby excluded, so of course is a dogmatic concept, including such considerations as: it follows from belief in God's omnipotence that he can perform miracles. For belief in God's omnipotence is possible to me only as I have faith in miracle. Therefore I cannot employ this faith apologetically to validate faith in miracle. The *idea* of God's omnipotence I may well hold, that is, I can conceive of God as almighty (so can the godless); but I do not thereby have *God*, the almighty, whom I never and nowhere have except in miracle.

What is here first of all gained for the concept of miracle is that according to this point of view it cannot in any sense be taken to mean an event which sometime or somewhere can be verified in the world. So to verify miracle is to separate it from God and to understand it as world; for God cannot be put to the test of verification. *Miracle is, as miracle, hidden*—hidden for him who does not see God in it. It is then clear, first, that the miracle about which faith speaks is in fact not a miracle in the sense of being a publicly demonstrable event: this would be nothing else than a verifiable event; and, second, miracle does not confirm faith in *this* sense, that as verifiable event it closes the argument as to the existence of the invisible God. For then God's hiddenness would be thought of in terms of the invisibility of a natural force, such as electricity; that is, God would be thought of as world. Faith can only be referred to that in which it has faith, not to something else by means of which it believes.

But if the question whether I see a miracle is identical with whether I have faith—that is, with whether I am *willing* to have faith or see a miracle—if, in other words, it is a question for decision in each particular case, then it is also clear that *just as truly as miracle as an event in the world is visible, so surely is miracle as an act of God hidden.* That is, the affirmation of an event as a miracle stands in express contradiction to any assertion of it as an event in the world.⁴ Since faith is faith precisely in contrast to sight, that is, in explicit contradiction to all that I see, faith in miracle must also mean contradiction to all that I see in the world. Since faith has this character for the reason that I am by nature godless, clearly the impossibility of my seeing secular events as miracles must have its basis in my godlessness. And since the *idea of nature* as a law-abiding continuum is the end product of my inability to see secular occurrences as miracles, obviously this idea

⁴ Luther on Rom. 8:26: Ficker, p. 204, 11 ff.: "For it is necessary that the work of God be hidden and not comprehended, at the time it happens. Yet it is hidden in no other way than under a pattern contradictory to our thought or expectation."

must itself be appraised as *godless*. Nevertheless, this cannot be interpreted to mean that I should simply surrender it; for this I cannot do. Rather, this only makes clear to me that godlessness is not the sort of thing that one can strip off by vigorous decision, but that godlessness is a characteristic of my existence, that my existence is determined by sin.

I may very well understand, then, what miracle means: God's act. I may also understand that God's acts should be visible to me in secular occurrences. I know, however, that I do not see them; for the world appears to me as nature, nor can I free myself from this predicament by a decision that it ought to be otherwise. And I shall take care not to work myself up into a state of mind which might suggest that I can.

2. *The Reality of Miracle.*

God's *hiddenness* does not mean his invisibility in general; it does not mean that he is inaccessible to the senses or to experiment. It means that he is hidden from *me*. Nor is it a matter of duty in general, or of the divine essence about which I may speak without speaking of myself. Consequently, to speak of miracle does not mean speaking of miracles in general and discussing their possibility. To speak of miracle is to say something about my own existence, that is, it is to affirm that in my life God has become visible. And this is not to speak of a general visibility of God, but of his revelation. When I see that God's hiddenness means he is hidden from *me*, then I also see that his hiddenness means my godlessness; it means that I am a sinner. For he *ought* not to be hidden from me.

There is, then, only *one* miracle: that of *revelation*. And this means revelation of God's grace for the godless—forgiveness. But revelation here must be understood strictly as *event*, not as an *idea* of forgiveness, nor as a *concept* of the grace of God as inherent in the nature of God, but as God's *act*. The import of this must be further explicated to make it clear, first, that forgiveness is a miracle in contradistinction to a secular occurrence, and, second, on what the possibility of confusing miracle as an act of God with miracle as an event contrary to nature is based.

Why is the demand for a "sign" characteristic of the Jews (I Cor. 1:22)? It is because the essential nature of their godlessness stands out so clearly in this attitude; namely, a striving after their "own righteousness." They understand themselves in terms of what they accomplish, and others in terms of what *they* accomplish. As they desire to accredit themselves before God by their accomplishment, so God must accredit himself before them by what he accomplishes.

But at bottom this is precisely the sin of the whole world: *to understand itself and God in terms of accomplishment and work*. Therefore for the world—in so far as it inquires after God—miracle as a public event contrary to nature is an object of ardent desire; miracle, however, as an act of God which does not have the character of a self-accrediting accomplishment is an offense. We have seen that the primitive concept of miracle corresponds to the understanding of our world as the work-a-day world in which we presuppose the regularity and law-abiding character of natural occurrence. Although miracle in this sense is a violation of the law of such a world, nevertheless it is conceived wholly in terms of this world because it is thought of as an act by which God is demonstrated within the world. However, the idea of miracle as an act of God (in contrast to miracle as *contra naturam*) radically cancels out the character of the world as a manipulable work-a-day world. For a miracle is precisely not an event in which God is publicly demonstrated; rather, every man is free to understand the event which claims to be a miracle as an event within the world and subject to its laws. But miracle directs the crucial question to man as to how far he correctly understands the world when he understands it as a manipulable work-a-day world subject to his disposal; how far he understands himself correctly when he understands himself in terms of his achievements and strives to obtain security by them. The idea of miracle radically cancels out the character of the world as a manipulable work-a-day world because it cancels out man's understanding of himself as capable of obtaining security by his work.

A priori, there are two possible ways of understanding the meaning of what we do: namely, as the bringing about of something (i.e., the deed is understood from the standpoint of what is done); or as a doing now taking place. Herewith also are given two possibilities for the understanding of ourselves: *in terms of what we have done or in terms of the doing of it*.

That is, what we do takes place either as the fulfillment of the demand that is laid upon us, under which each of our Nows stands—in which case, it is nothing but obedience. Or it takes place in order that something in which the meaning of the act is exhausted is brought about or achieved. If it takes place in obedience and as obedience, something is indeed brought about or achieved by our action; yet, the meaning of the action lies not in the achievement but in the obedient performance of the deed—just as the meaning of giving a gift lies not in the gift but in the giving.

If this is taken seriously it means that consequent upon every act a man cannot rest upon that which has been done nor can he contain himself

within what has been achieved or understand himself in terms of it. Rather, he can only say that as a "slave" he has done what he was obligated to do (Luke 17:10). He must not look backward to see what he has done but forward to what he is further obligated to do. Yet he must look forward, not in haste and dread because he still has this or that to get done, but simply in obedience.

If what we do is done under God's demand, it is never completed. Consequently, it is not possible for us to bring effort to a stop and set ourselves up as persons who in some sense have arrived. Rather, we must remain in the restlessness to which God's demand consigns us. This unrest, however, is the unrest of living. For, just as we are not to stop and look backward, neither are we to stand and reflect upon the future in the sense of projecting a program of everything which must be done. For then we should again be understanding ourselves in terms of what is done, of the completed—though, of course, in the sense of the not-yet-complete. But what this means is that we are seeing ourselves under the category of the completed and understanding ourselves in terms of what is done. The demand of God, however, does not consign us to the restlessness of dread and care as to how that which lies before us is to be completed, but to the restlessness of living. For it tears us away from ourselves as we actually are; it tears us away from our past and directs us into the future.

But since, however, our doing also always does accomplish something, it harbors within itself the temptation to understand ourselves in terms of what we have done and to cling fast to that. In point of fact, we are always succumbing to this temptation and thereby succumbing to the past, for what is done is already past. Even our future doing, to the extent that we understand ourselves in terms of the thing that is done—even though that thing be future—is already past, marked with the seal of the past and of death. For our future doing stands there as accomplishment—as an established, achieved situation.⁵ That we all are mired down in such an understanding of ourselves becomes clear to us from the fact that we all fear death, for such fear issues from the desire to maintain ourselves just as we are and from our secret awareness that we cannot.

We are all mired in such an understanding of ourselves, nor can we free ourselves from this subjection to the past, to death, by our own efforts. For this sought-for freedom would again be thought of as a work of our own, wrested from ourselves as a last and highest accomplishment. Such a doing would already be past before it was done. We should be free only

⁵ Luther on Rom. 8:26, p. 205, 5 f. "It always happens thus: we know our work before it is done, but we do not know God's work until it is done."

if we could forget our work, if we acted wholly out of obedience. And the question is how we can come to such obedience, to such a pure hearing of God's demand in the Now. The question is whether we *can* so hear. Obviously we cannot simply decide of ourselves that we will hear, nor can we wait to see whether we do hear, for we are always already involved in a doing by which we wish to achieve something. Every Now into which we come is always already corrupted by our actual understanding of ourselves; our past out of which we come clings to us.

There is only one possibility of becoming free *from the past* for a pure hearing of the demand which in the Now lays claim upon us: that freedom is bestowed upon us *through forgiveness*. For it is not possible for us as beings in time to obtain release from the past simply by blotting it out or ignoring it or by receiving some such thing as a new nature—for we would not be able to keep ourselves within it, either. It is always out of our past and with our past that we come into our Now. For since we are not plants, animals or machines, our every Now is qualified by our past. But the question is whether our past is present within us as a sinful or as a forgiven past. If our sin is forgiven, that means that we have freedom for the future, that we can really hear God's demand and put ourselves at his disposal (Rom. 6:12 ff).

Now, moreover, it becomes wholly clear why *forgiveness must be understood as a miracle*, that is as an act of God in contrast to a secular event. The world which it confronts as its opposite is just our manipulable work-a-day world in which by definition all doing is understood as an achieving of the done, the accomplishment of something; in which all occurrences, even future occurrences, are by definition thought of as past. If the real miracle is forgiveness, that is, if God in the miracle abolishes that understanding of ourselves by which we consider ourselves persons who accomplish something (and hence are always victims of the past), he thereby also abolishes the character of the world as a work-a-day world manipulable by us.

Since in doing, something is always done, the possibility always remains of understanding all doing as past and done and all occurrence as having occurred in the past. *For the eye of unfaith even God's doing is a secular event that has occurred*. And since the believer also knows that it may be so regarded, and that he himself always stands within the possibility of seeing all events in this way, when he speaks of God's acts, he must speak of them as miracles which happen *contra naturam*; he must affirm that when he speaks of a miracle, he destroys the force of the idea of nature as law-abiding. However, to apply the ideas of miracle and

creation to the world understood as nature is nonsense, for the world which is regarded as past is by the same token not regarded as creation. It retains its character as creation only when we, as those who have been forgiven, stand open for the future, and see the world as standing open for us as the field in which we are to hear and realize God's demand.

To regard the world in this way is *no Weltanschauung*, that is, no theory about the world in general, but is an attitude never attained except each time that we hear God's demand because we are forgiven. Therefore it must constantly assert itself against our temptation to understand ourselves and the world as things past. This means that our "work-ideas," in which we count upon the manipulability (that is, upon the law-abiding character) of the world, must always be limited by our "faith-ideas," and this means further that in our actual life, work-ideas and faith-ideas must alternate with one another in such a way that the former are determined by the latter. For his work-ideas man needs the conception of nature. To what extent he needs it cannot be stated in general terms. He needs it to the extent that he is involved in a concrete work. But if he permits the conception of nature to become lord, then it becomes sin.

Now we are able to reach a definitive understanding of the concept of *miracle as an event contrary to nature* and of its entanglement with the concept of miracle as an act of God. Miracle as an event contrary to nature is either a desperate expression for man's secret knowledge that he has fallen victim to the past; it has become impossible for him to understand the world as creation and to see God's activity in it; if he speaks of God's activity, he can conceive of it only by analogy with secular activity as a particular achievement, and thereby still remains a prisoner to his old understanding of the world. Or, the concept of miracle gives expression, if only vaguely and primitively, to the idea that God's activity is understood as standing in contrast to all secular occurrence and worldly activity.

Now we can also understand the above-mentioned *diluted pantheistic concept of miracle*. For at work in it is the correct motif that faith has the capacity to see the world as creation, that it can speak of ever new miracles because it sees God's activity in the operation of the universe. Yet the misunderstanding which assumes that the believer has, as it were, a bill of exchange which he can cash at will, that he has a Christian world-view by virtue of which he can now interpret all activity and occurrence as acts of God, must be thrust aside. For, in the first place, faith must always be won anew in battle against the "work-ideas" which threaten to seduce faith; and, in the second place, no miracle is ever visible except on the basis of the one

miracle of forgiveness. This, however, is no fact of the past; on the contrary, I never have it, as forgiveness, except as ever and again I seize it anew. *Semper credendum*; one exists as a Christian only when one is in *gratia*.

If this is so, then the Christian really has the possibility of *seeing ever new miracles*. The operation of the universe which to the eye of unfaith must appear as a sequence of events subject to law, acquires for him the character of a universe in which God acts. And to the extent that he himself hears God's demand and acts in obedience, even his own doing is no longer a secular "work," but is a doing of miracles.

Every miracle, therefore, is real only with reference to faith in the one miracle of forgiveness in Christ. Thus it is false, apart from this faith, to detect a distinction between *the Christian and the pagan idea of miracle*. Each may be conceived primitively and each radically; each may cling to miracle as an event *contra naturam*, and in each the idea of God's activity may be clearly set forth. The difference between Christianity and paganism does not lie in a divergent idea of miracle any more than it does in a divergent idea of God in general; it lies only in the fact that Christianity speaks of the real God because it can speak of the real miracle.

IV. THE MIRACLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

In the New Testament miracles are reported which have the character of miracle as an event contrary to nature, especially some of the miracles of Jesus. To the extent that they are deeds of Jesus (healings, and so forth), they are deeds which occurred to those whom they concerned at the time. Even if they were all assuredly historical (or to whatever extent they may be so), nevertheless the fact is that as deeds of a man of the past they do not directly concern us. Seen in this way, they are not works of Christ to the extent that we understand the work of Christ to be salvation.⁶

Therefore, in discussing the "miracles of Jesus," in so far as they are events of the past, they must be unreservedly exposed to criticism. Let it be most emphatically stated that it is of absolutely no importance for the Christian faith to prove the possibility or historicity of the miracles of Jesus as events of the past, but that, on the contrary, this would only be a confusion of the issue.

⁶ Luther on Gal. 4:4 f. W. A. XL, I, p. 568, 9 ff: That Christ also gives commandments is not his proper office, but is an accidental one; likewise his benefits: teaching, comforting and doing good deeds. These are not the "proper works of Christ." "For the prophets also taught and wrought miracles. But Christ is God and man, who as such endures the Law of Moses and its outward tyranny, who conquers Moses and that tyranny, who fights with the Law and suffers death, and who afterward, rising from the dead, condemned and subdued our enemy." All the other works are "ordinary works" (*opera vulgaria*).

If it is as the preached Christ that he becomes for us a present reality, then the miracles of Jesus also can be relevant only in so far as they belong to proclaiming Christ, that is, as testimonies. They are relevant, moreover, because they point up the whole *ambiguity of Christian preaching*. They show that a miracle, as an event which can be substantiated, is precisely not adapted to establishing faith; for miracles leave every man free to attribute them to a cause intelligible to himself. They have no protection against being explained as acts of the devil (Mk. 3:22), or as deeds by which Jesus accredits himself (Mk. 8:11 f.) and on the basis of which people are on the point of making him king (Jn. 6:14 ff.), or as means by which people want to enhance their own welfare (Jn. 6:26). The same ambiguity clings to them as to the miracle which is Christ himself.

For Jesus Christ is for unfaith a knowable fact of the past, capable of being historically integrated into a specific situation in the past and of being understood historically. The question is precisely whether we wish to see him in this way as a fact of the past, as a historic figure, as a personality and the like, or as God's miracle, that is, as the one who for our sakes is here as the Word of Forgiveness spoken by God. The temptation is always with us to make his now-present personal reality into a once-present inert entity of the past. The scandal of the incarnation is always to be overcome. Whoever professes to observe the revelation of God in the historical personality of Jesus exposes himself to Kierkegaard's sarcastic remark, that he is more clever than God himself who as a matter of fact sent his Son in the concealment of flesh. To apply the idea of revelation to the historically observable personality is as senseless as to apply the idea of creation or miracle to the world understood as nature.

Yet, further, the miracles of Jesus are also testimonies in that they point to the fact that *Christian faith in God is neither pantheism nor monism*; that faith is not in a position to speak when and as it will of God's acts, but only when it perceives God's action in the specific concrete instance. Christian faith in God is no *Weltanschauung*; it is always won in a particular moment; and it says, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mk. 9:24). It is, then, a faith which consists not in a psychological attitude of man but ever and always exists only as faith in the God who, unlike things, is not at man's disposal to think of as he likes, but is seen only when he chooses to show himself. Therefore that sort of doubt about God which demands proof of God must be rejected, and man must be brought to doubt himself, that is, to become aware that he errs when he thinks he is lord of himself and the world. He must despair.

Christian Maturity

NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

"**W**HAT HAPPENS after you grow old an' have wrinkles an' everything, Daddy?" my small son asked me the other day, the way age four to five is sometimes prone to do.

"Well, nothing, I mean nothing in particular, that is," I answered evasively, as fathers with small sons aged four to five are sometimes prone to do.

"An' after that?"

"Well, you die, I suppose," but the sound of my words had hardly gone into the child's ears before I had begun to entertain misgivings about having brought up the subject of death before such a young person.

"That's when you close your eyes an' you don't move no more?" The child's question was clear enough even if his grammar was a bit foggy.

"Yes, that's right," I was forced to answer, now that I had let myself get trapped into having the discussion.

"Will you and Mommy die?"

"Yes," was all I could say.

Then he asked the question that was ineluctable under the circumstances. "Will I die too?"

It occurred to me I might evade the question or even lie; but if four-and-a-half is not completely rational, it does possess certain powers of generalization. It stands even to that age's reason that if all other creatures must die, assuredly he will also. There was nothing else to say but "Yes."

Frowning as much as young facial muscles permit, he said, more to himself than me, "I don't want to die."

Perhaps I am the kind of parent who feels the child's pain more intensely than the child himself, but I thought I saw real distress on my son's face, so that I took him on my knee and tried to tell him about Heaven. When the topic no longer interested him and he had gone away back to his toys, I was left alone to think about death.

We Americans spend a tremendous amount of time and money in a field that is loosely called "education." It was many years ago that we

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gave up thinking of education as a process only applicable to the academic disciplines. First the learning of trades fell under the educationalist's net and then, in part as a consequence, the concept of "education for living" made its appearance among us. The latter idea brought with it the notion that *mens sana in corpore sano* was an insufficient educational goal; it was widely felt that much more was needed. Our schools began to teach children how to drive automobiles, how to do the family shopping when one grows up, but more significant, they also began to teach children how to "relate to a group," how to court, how to choose a spouse. Even the nuptial couch, which had preserved a certain inviolability in a period when the courts are saying a man's home is not necessarily his castle—even this private place has become a fit object for classroom discussion.

I do not allude to these topics in order to discuss the wisdom of including them as school subject-matter, but to suggest that their presence indicates that educator and layman alike may have made some dangerous assumptions about man and the world. Perhaps the best way of making my meaning clear is to contrast our handling of two phenomena that are indelibly part of man: sex and death.

That there *can* be such a thing as "sex education" is scarcely disputed by men today; that there *should* be, will hardly be disputed either. Current thought has it that sex, when part of married love, is good and ennobling; nor is the idea only upheld by religious groups but by secular publications and authorities also. To allow a child to grow into adulthood without being prepared to experience sex in this way is generally considered only slightly less than criminal. Is there a woman's magazine in the country that has failed to be advanced enough to wage war on parental "Victorian attitudes," which are popularly supposed to be the cause of many young people's sexual problems?

The remedy most commonly proposed is the presentation of physiological and social knowledge pertaining to sex. We seem to be a people who have accepted the dictum that "knowing your problem is half its solution," and are at no end of pains to see that the kids know almost all there is to know. In the case of death, however, our instinctive reactions are contrary to what we felt when dealing with sex. Instead of charging ahead and making sure our children get all the "facts," we prefer them to remain as ignorant as possible for as long a time as possible; and when the course of life itself prevents withholding the information from our children, we are inclined to hurry past the subject. We tend to treat it like the man whose path takes him past an old house of unhappy memory. Looking

neither to the right nor the left, his coat collar pulled up about his ears, he walks by, trying to think of other, more pleasant things.

It seems to me there are a number of reasons for our adopting such an attitude about death, and among them is that we are not so invincibly convinced that "knowing your problem is half its solution." With death the order of things is neatly reversed, so that knowledge creates the problem rather than making it vanish. The dark hour each of us must pass through when we learn fully and personally that we are mortal is not made one whit brighter by our being apprised of all the "facts." Our concern for the psychological problems surrounding sex, and our contrasting disinclination to take up the problems surrounding death, in the background of modern American culture is not surprising.

Death is by no means the only subject which does not fit the "knowing your problem is half its solution" formula. The domain of ethics and morals apparently is not very susceptible to the treatment either; for in spite of a great deal of cant dished out in these areas, parents and educators seem content to sloganeer while they neglect their customary hunt for "solutions." Characteristic of a people who habitually worry about their interior states of mind and emotion, we apply our formulae to questions relating to personal psychology, to "interpersonal relations," and the myriad of minor categories that are subsumed under these two general ones. Throughout, however, the great idea persists that he who has the "information" and can "recognize" his problem is on the highroad to a "solution." This thesis, as I have crudely stated it, is undoubtedly a popularization, but the idea's kernel survives in the more rarified air of the psychoanalyst's chamber and the nondirective counselor's discussion room.

Solutions, I think, are for arithmeticians and the simple-minded who cannot stand to be near an unsolved problem or an unexplained fact. There is no solution for death; death *is*. The opinions and modes of thought now in vogue are impotent in front of the soul-shaking fact of death. It is better to put it aside, postpone it, try not to think about it and, since that only works for limited stretches of time, hope our own deaths will be quick, painless and unexpected.

Americans are gregarious on the whole, outward-going, or "outer-directed" as Mr. Riesman calls it, and much of our modern thought about bringing up children reflects it. The intensity with which we enmesh ourselves with others sheds some light on why newly coined expressions such as "involvement," "relating one's self to," "adjusting one's self to," are so quickly understood and so widely employed. It would be impossible

to state how far and how deeply these notions have diffused themselves; but judging from what teachers say, the contents of women's magazines, the "home" pages of the daily newspapers, they have gained credence almost everywhere. It practically seems as if we think an earthly nirvana might be attained if we could only get everybody to "participate" in exactly the same way everybody else is "participating."

We may be able to live by "participation," but we must die alone. I might assert that almost every other event in a human's life can be thought of as some kind of shared experience, something done in common. Even birth, when a man enters the world, requires the mother's intimate presence, and throughout life he lives with other people or is thinking about them, but he must leave the world alone. Such an exit is highly un-American. As we take our first reluctant step into the "valley of the shadow," it is inescapably obvious that this is the most stringently personal experience since our conception. How terribly unfit are we for what we must endure! Who has an "involvement" with death? In the language of our literature death "comes," "snatches," "grasps," "carries us off," but never does it "involve" us. How many human beings can "relate" themselves to death? Why, none. It is the very last thing we want to do or have been taught to do.

Actually death is by no means the only time we find ourselves alone. Since the dawn of the first day man began to contemplate his own nature, he has been plagued by the fact that he has, as it were, two natures. He is a member of a human society which strives to form him from the instant of his birth by putting words in his mouth, by teaching him everything he knows, and, failing all else, by making it clear that pronounced examples of "maladjustment" will bring down on the nonconformist's head a draconian punishment up to and including death. Nevertheless no man can lose sight of his own uniqueness. His fragile and finite body and the uncommunicable stream of consciousness that runs within him ceaselessly insist that he is he, and there is no one else exactly like him.

Christian faith and the culture it has inspired have traditionally sharpened the image of this inner man, first by defining it as a soul, and secondly by loading the soul with a number of important moral responsibilities. The result has sometimes been a struggle between the private inner man and the public social man who both dwell within us. Painful as it may be to admit, no resolution is possible without seriously changing, I might even say, impairing one of our dual natures. The *Zeitgeist* of various epochs has oscillated the emphasis of thought from the public to

the private man. Medieval man presumably dwelt on his social self at the expense of his private self, but the Enlightenment changed that, reversing the order of importance. Nevertheless neither age attempted to subordinate one of man's two natures to the point of reducing it to a nullity. The demolition job was left to us moderns who, with Mead and Russell in the van and the Sunday Supplements in the rear, have fallen to with great gusto.

I want to avoid discussing the validity of the assertion made by latter-day philosophers and psychologists that the private inner man is a creature of the social outer man. Whether the assertion is true or false, there can be no doubt that the inner man exists, and no amount of demonstration as to his social origins can alter the fact of his existence. Current education theory, albeit in a grossly simplified form, runs something like this: If human personality is both the product and reflection of society in microcosm, the child may be educated solely in terms of the people around him. And what happens to the inner man while this is going on? Is he aborted and not permitted to come to life inside the individual? I should think not. Like it or not, he springs into existence during a human's tender years. He is the pertinacious child of all civilization, but particularly the West's. Neither "participation," "role-playing," nor "involvement" will exorcise him.

The question remains, what happens to the inner man in the situation we place him in today? He is left untrained, crudely unpolished, and neglected. That he should be so is nothing to shrug our shoulders at, for the inner man is the executor of our moral legacy, the inheritance preserved for us by two thousand years. It does little good to weep copious tears in fashionable quarterlies and on public rostra about the "decline" of everything good, and the rise of everything bad, about our "lack of faith" in ourselves, in our government, our civilization and our God. By ceaseless subornation we have rendered the inner man a moral eunuch. Public life has had to pay a certain price, but I doubt it has been as great as the one many people have had to pay in their private lives.

Though we allow the inner man to grow up untrained and savage, life endlessly calls upon him to deal with ideas like death. Unfortunately, having been ignored and allowed to shift for himself, he retains his capacity to suffer, but the ability to master the source of his sufferings lies dormant and consequently useless. Nature herself provides most men with some kind of mechanism for living with, if not comprehending, their own mortality; but with regard to other purely personal events, I think the

discrepancy between what the inner man has been trained to do and what the experiences of life demand of him has caused terrible anguish. The observations set forth here cannot entirely explain today's wholesale demand for psychiatric help, but the anomalies I have been trying to suggest may be an important factor.

Certainly the usual American approach to death reflects anything but the ability to face it competently. By a pathetic use of euphemisms we begin by attempting the impossible task of denying death's actual existence. "Undertaker" is a word too reminiscent of the man's job, and so we use the word "mortician," perhaps in hopes that we will be reminded of "beautician." "Coffin" is a box for the dead bodies, but "casket" is a pleasant-sounding French word. Who knows, it may remind people of a jewel box. "Graveyards" have become "cemeteries," and now seem to be evolving into "resting places" and "havens" in which people "sleep." If words could do it, we would all be immortals by this time.

There was a time in this country that when a person died, he was put in a box, prayed over, and buried. That time is long past. It is likely the first people to leave the coffin lid open were the nouveau riche, aping the funeral obsequies of European generals who lay in state, but that rationale has lost favor almost universally. Dead bodies are now shampooed, bathed, perfumed, made up to look "just like Aunt Eloise always did" and bedecked in party clothes. The bizarre sitting up of corpses in "life poses" is no more an Amy Semple McPherson rarity; people are doing it all the time, and the undertaker who can best simulate life in death is the one in most demand. For such people death is so horrifying, ugly and cruel, they will go to any length to pretend it is not.

The way men view death seems to influence their understanding of the meaning of life. To the Christian and the Stoic alike, death can be the outer frame of life by which they can give meaning and understanding to their own and other men's acts. For him who sees in death only the savagery of insensate biology and nothing more, his life seems to have all the meaninglessness of his death. If this contention is true, what can we make of the people who refuse to be told of their own death's coming, and of the people who will not tell another person he is dying? There are many people who can make nothing out of death and must, by consequence, put it as far off as possible. If you must die, go die in a hospital where no one can see it, and please understand why we will not let your children see you buried. Who is the adult talking to when he tells the child his dead mother has "gone on a long, long, trip"?

One wonders if such feeble self-subterfuges are the only recourse for people under the spell of the new education. Or maybe there is an aspect to the new education that cannot deal with death and the rest of the moral problems the inner man once busied himself with.

At the present time, to be "mature" is to be everything. Everywhere it is presumed the "mature individual" can handle any situation that might arise in his personal life. Even Miss Advice-to-the-Lovelorn writing her caustic comments in the Daily Blow-Hard has abandoned her traditional exhortation of "Grow up!" in favor of "Be mature!" During the era of the Common or Average Man we eventually got the idea he was a point on a consumer-demand curve, but what is the "Mature Individual"? It is easy enough to say what he is like; he is *not* immature, he is affectionate but never jealous, he "understands himself," the list of his admirable attributes is as long as you care to extend it, but a nicely precise definition always seems to hide obscurely around the next corner.

By the process of culling and shifting the Pacific Ocean of words written on the general topic of "maturity," we begin to get the impression he is a vastly complicated "conditioned reflex," that is, a superbly adjusted creature of his environment. In more sophisticated circles the proviso is added that he is one who "accepts himself," but the difficulty resides in the fact that the "self" he accepts is this child of society. How is such an individual in childhood or as an adult to deal with the problem of his death, and therefore the actual meaning of his life? And how is our "well adjusted, mature man" to find it within himself to stand alone, to be unpopular, to be aggressive, to be truthful? He cannot find it within himself, because under this scheme of things that which he might find within himself has never been planted and cultivated. The "mature individual's" inner man has been left untrained and allowed to exist as a bundle of hypersensitivities, potentially able to do everything, actually competent to do nothing.

In passing it is interesting to note the one group which as a whole has resisted bowing its head to the view of the world and practices I have been attempting to discuss. It is, of course, the people steeped in the liberal arts tradition, and they have often had to bear a good deal of ridicule for refusing to swim with the tide. From the beginning they have insisted that a view of man based exclusively on his immediate relationship to other men must end in creating a dismally uniform mediocrity. And they were right, just as they were right in saying the final *reductio ad absurdum* would be the destruction of the good and the beautiful.

None of this is to say that our only hope is an abrupt about-face back to Dr. Eliot's bookshelf. The last fifty years or so have been as valuable to our understanding of man as any similar stretch of time. It is a truism to state that much of the observation and thought of recent years is an incalculably great help to parent, teacher and society.

That there is justice in the idea of the "mature man" cannot be seriously disputed; but the "mature man" is not the whole man. There must, I think, be another kind of maturity beyond social and psychological maturity, which, depending upon our particular beliefs, could be called Christian or Stoic maturity. I ought to make it clear that "Stoic" is used here in its loosest sense to suggest the system of values held by some of the "de-Christianized" portions of our population. It is not properly Stoic, and as a system of ethics it has not received the attention and development it needs to merit being thought of as the non-Christian "way" for our epoch.

Perhaps one reason Americans have taken the "maturity" idea so much to heart is that it represents for us a means of attaining happiness, or failing that, contentment, and this is a commodity we cherish not only dearly but in a unique way. It is possible that we are the sybarites we are accused of being, but, whatever the reason, we are convinced that happiness is the birthright of all men here and now. This sets us apart from much of the rest of the world's population, living and dead, who also want happiness, but view the human drama as an inseparable compound of happiness and sadness.

The spiritual exercises that becoming "well adjusted" entails will suffice and even profit us in the days of our lives when the weather blows fair, but regardless of what we consider our birthright, our lot is to endure pain, sadness, and death also. This requires a maturity which can look with equanimity and understanding at life and death, at the thousand and one situations where no solution exists and no certainty is to be had. The final maturity, then, needs to have the inner man trained in a way that will complement the outer man's training. Ultimately that can only mean training in virtue.

In the past three hundred centuries enough has been said about virtue, Christian and Stoic, to allow me to make reference to it and move on without fear of being misunderstood. I think it is only necessary to point out that modern philosophy and psychology have given birth to so many new perspectives that the already difficult problem of treating ethics is now made more difficult yet. From where we stand today, the older idea that virtue must of necessity be the same for all human beings has become almost

unsupportable, but we are still a long way from being able to think very confidently about it in the light of modernity.

No matter what the outcome of these philosophical problems, virtue itself is a quality that is not dependent upon the values and practices of a society. More often than not a virtuous act is judged both "immature" and "maladjusted," but since the sources of the act are beyond the social horizon, it makes little difference. Equipped with virtue, the inner man escapes his trap of being made to deal with private problems in public terms. The possibility of looking at death with meaning instead of wide-eyed horror is restored to us and our children, and the meaning of death provides the definition of life.

Religious Opposition in Latin America

STEWART HERMAN

What can the Evangelical church do to combat religious prejudice and opposition? While some Protestant groups seem to have made it a policy to misrepresent Roman Catholicism as badly as Roman Catholics have misrepresented Protestantism, most of the responsible evangelical groups have wisely refrained from ill-tempered abuse. It is self-evident that Protestantism's best policy is simply to bear witness to the whole Gospel by word and deed. All too often Latin Americans have been led to believe that evangelical Christianity was little more than a negative repudiation of Roman Catholicism. Magnificent ethical principles were reduced and restricted by some groups to a few matters of personal behavior having to do with smoking, drinking, card-playing and movie-going. Worship services were believed to be appealing to the convert in direct proportion to a total lack of liturgical embellishment. And, in an effort to meet the problem of Protestant denominationalism, the differences between Evangelicals were either stressed too strongly (that is, in favor of one's own particular doctrine) or watered down so thoroughly that the debate with Rome lost all its relevance. . . . Admittedly, a direct and fruitful encounter with Latin-American Catholicism is not easy to imagine, but the day is rapidly approaching when it will probably occur. The Roman church itself is increasingly aware of its own mission field in Latin America and of the need to oppose evangelical growth with spiritual rather than physical weapons. Protestants must not only welcome this development but prepare for it.¹

¹ From *Lutheran Churches of the World*. Augsburg Publishing House, 1957, pp. 310-11. Used by permission.

Sholem Asch and His Plea for Reconciliation

ROSA BLUDWORTH

THE THREE New Testament novels of Sholem Asch—*The Nazarene* (1939), *The Apostle* (1943), and *Mary* (1949) plead eloquently for a mutual understanding between Jews and Christians. Asch sees the two faiths bound by a common spiritual heritage and by common concern for morality, justice, and mercy. This notion is intrinsic throughout the trilogy. Without the Jewish yearning for a Messiah, Jesus Christ could not have been born. Without the Jewish synagogues, Paul could not have preached the Risen Lord. Without the devout Hebrew home of Joseph and Mary, the Holy Child would not have had "where to lay his head." Rooted in his faith in the significance of Israel is Asch's intense desire for reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity. It is not for a theological union that he pleads but for a sympathetic understanding between the two faiths that will result in increased good will among all men. The author himself has plainly affirmed his purpose:

I have never considered deserting the faith of my fathers, and I never intend to do so. My books have made enemies for me in some quarters, but I have shown how deeply rooted Christianity is in Jewish history and Jewish religion. And my intention has been to demonstrate the interdependence of the two faiths, in the hope that mutual understanding may lead to a better world.¹

I. *The Nazarene*, 1939

Sholem Asch began work on *The Nazarene* in 1907 at the time of his first visit to Palestine. Feeling himself inadequate for the task, he then spent more than thirty years in preparation before final publication in 1939. During this time he made repeated visits to the Holy Land for further study of the land and its people, amassing meanwhile an extensive library and immersing himself completely in the past. In an interview entitled

¹ R. G., *Saturday Review of Literature*, XXXII (October 8, 1949), p. 20.

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"Mr. Asch Returns From the Past," Robert Van Gelder reports Asch as saying: "For many years I have lived in the past, in the temples and roads of Jerusalem, studying and writing and rewriting, until the life of today seems less real than the life of that day."²

The plot is based upon the life of Christ, especially upon the Crucifixion, thrice retold: once by the Roman, Cornelius, again by Judas Iscariot, and lastly by Jochanan, a student of Nicodemus. These three accounts give the book a tripartite structure. They are set in an extremely complicated framework and are controlled and united by the theme of the Wandering Jew, whom Asch utilizes for his central character—old Pan Viadomsky, who cannot die. He is introduced as living in our day, in Poland, though his first existence was in Palestine, in the days of Jesus. There, as the Roman soldier Cornelius, he directed the Crucifixion. For this act, which he performed with unnecessary taunts and insults, he was punished by God with the curse of living on in one body after another through the centuries until he should merit forgiveness and "the divine tear" should fall to melt the hardness of his heart. As the irascible Viadomsky in modern Poland, he lashes out against the Jews; his frequent tirades bring into sharp focus the tension between Jews and gentiles.

In this presentation of Viadomsky, the author is guided by a more important consideration: his desire to show forth the worth of Israel and thereby heal the long estrangement between Jew and Christian. Asch is saying, as it were, "Let us get at once to the heart of the matter: the Crucifixion of Jesus, which brought salvation to the gentiles and was 'unto the Jews a stumbling block.'" And how better face the issue than through the soldier who directed what took place on Calvary? Thus Asch makes Cornelius reveal, not at the time of the Crucifixion but after the guilt of centuries has lain heavily upon his soul, the burden of his sin.

In Part II of the novel Asch creates an apocryphal Gospel of Judas, which we are led to assume was removed by Cornelius from the tomb-cave where Judas had hidden it. Centuries later it is in Viadomsky's possession. Unable to read its old script and language, Viadomsky (Cornelius reincarnated) hires a young Jew called Josephus to translate the ancient document. Within this Gospel two men are measured: Judas, the author, who cannot grasp spiritual values, and Jesus, the subject, the fulfillment of messianic dreams. The story is beautifully told of the Rabbi whose name spreads "like an ointment through the land." Asch pictures the mounting eagerness of the people for the advent of the Messiah until

² *New York Times Book Review*, April 28, 1940, p. 16.

Judas, bursting with his question, presses Jesus as to his identity. "Judah [Judas]," replies the Rabbi, "I am only he who sitteth in thy heart. I am faith. I dwell in each heart in that measure in which the heart can hold me."³ But Judas' heart has not room enough to encompass such sublimity. His dreams are of an earthly realm. Asch depicts him finally betraying his Rabbi in order to compel Jesus to assert his divinity and so bring in, as Judas believes, the long-awaited Kingdom of God.

The author's basic theme of the reconciliation of the two faiths reveals itself in Part III in the account of the last days of Jesus as narrated by Josephus, the Jewish scholar. Engaged by Viadomsky in the work of translation, Josephus is drawn into the past until he, like the Pole, resumes his life in it. With almost hypnotic power the old man commands him to revert to his former self, whereupon Josephus takes up his hitherto forgotten existence in biblical times as Jochanan, pupil of Rabbi Nicodemus. For the third time, therefore, the events of Holy Week are related, in this instance through the eyes of a devout Jew, who with his Rabbi represents the best of the Jewish tradition. One feels that the author himself is speaking through them, particularly through Nicodemus, that wise teacher of the Pharisees for whom his pupils feel love and boundless admiration.

In the discussion between Nicodemus and Philip the Greek, who is later to become a Christian, Asch pictures the conflict between Jewish and Greek beliefs and has Nicodemus point the way to faith in God. When Philip with his Greek appreciation for beauty, strength, and harmony challenges the faith expressed by Nicodemus, saying, "You do not even know if someone is there, in the darkness, to receive your cry," the wise Rabbi answers:

"Not into the darkness . . . but into the infinite. And we believe that there, within the infinite, is an Ear which listens, an Eye which sees. . . ."

"But what is faith, Rabbi? Where does one find it?" . . .

"The way to faith is pointed by faith itself. . . . Desire Him, thirst after Him—and you will apprehend Him."⁴

At the book's close, the high and holy tradition of Judaism speaks in the persons of the three Rabbis who dare at their peril to denounce the judgment of the Sanhedrin in condemning Jesus. It was not *all* the Jews who put him to death, Asch is saying, as he has Rabbi Gamaliel confront the Chief Officer of the Temple, demanding the release of Jesus and pronouncing,

³ *The Nazarene*, translated by Maurice Samuel, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939, p. 319.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 449-452.

after the priest's refusal, the awful curse: "Your name will be wiped out in Israel, and your memory will be recalled with imprecation until the end of days!"⁵

This retelling of the same events three times in *The Nazarene* becomes in the hands of Sholem Asch a skillful device comparable to Browning's multiple narration in *The Ring and the Book*. There is a parallel, also, to the four Gospels themselves, which are consciously imitated by the author in style and content, as his three accounts taken together form a magnificent fictional portrayal of Jesus: a Jew who loved his people and who in turn was revered by the greatest of the Rabbis. Through both Jew and gentile Asch synthesizes an interpretation of that event that has marked a tragic cleavage between the two faiths.

II. *The Apostle*, 1943

In *The Apostle*, a novel based on the life of Paul, the author traces the spread of Christianity as the culmination of Jewish religious thought. In this second book of his trilogy, Asch's sense of mission becomes more urgent and his expression more direct. Twice he interrupts the narrative to invoke the Almighty, once in supplication and once in thanksgiving. Thus, attempting to understand the mind of Saul, he prays:

O Father in heaven, Thou Who probest the souls of men, open a little ray of light for me into the bottomless darkness of the human heart, in order that I may penetrate for an instant into its mysteries; send one swift beam for me into the depths, in order that I may see, as in a flash of lightning, the forces that wage war for the possession of a man's soul. . . .⁶

Again, at the end of the novel, in a moving postscript the writer continues:

I thank Thee and praise Thee, Lord of the world, that Thou hast given me the strength to withstand all temptations and overcome all obstacles, those of my own making and those made by others, and to complete the two works, "The Nazarene" and "The Apostle," which are one work; so that I might set forth in them the merit of Israel, whom Thou hast elected to bring the light of the faith to the nations of the world, for Thy glory and out of Thy love of mankind.⁷

This expression of purpose and gratitude makes clear his reason for retelling the story of Paul.

The biblical delineation of the Apostle needs little retouching for the author's purpose. In the person of one man are presented the conflicting forces gathering about the Nazarene and multiplying alarmingly after his

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 667.

⁶ *The Apostle*, translated by Maurice Samuel, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1943, p. 149.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 804.

death. Here is a man "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." If Asch can penetrate this Jew's soul and understand why one day Paul harries the Christians with fanatic zeal and the next day changes direction on the Damascus Road, dedicating his life henceforth to the Rabbi whom he has cursed, then the author will have probed the old wound that has separated Jew and Christian, that healing may result.

Asch presents the young man of Tarsus in the opening scene denouncing the Galilean blasphemers who have given the name of "the Anointed of God" to one that was hanged. He is a student of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, where he is repelled by the moral depravity about him even as he longs for the Messiah who will change the whole world. Asch pictures him lacking in winsomeness and grace but nevertheless honest in his motives and without selfish ambition. According to the New Testament, Paul, believing the Christians to be preaching false doctrine, fights them with fierce hatred until his name becomes, says Asch, that of the Angel of Death. When he meets the forgiving love of those he flays and stones, the author shows him torn and shaken before the presence of a spirit he cannot fathom. Can he, Saul, be mistaken? Is *he* the sinner? After thus probing Saul's conscience, Asch expresses all the beauty and purity of the early Christians in the prayer of James for the young man starting out for Damascus to persecute the faithful:

Lord of the worlds, Thou Who art the father of all souls, have compassion toward the soul of the young man, Saul of Tarshish. Lift it from the nethermost depths into which it has fallen. Open his eyes, that he may see the light of Thy Holy servant, Yeshua [Jesus] the Messiah, whom Thou hast sent to us as comforter. Turn his heart to the good, in order that he may recognize and eschew the evil which he has done; and be compassionate to him in the hour of his repentance; strengthen him then, that he may not fall into despair and sin, but rely on Thy grace, and find strength in Thy faith; and bring him back upon the path of Thy teaching. Amen.⁸

Asch gives a vivid account of that fateful journey, of Paul's consequent missionary activity, and of his mellowing through the years of his ministry. So it is that, in the tumult of conflicting emotions and intellectual struggle in the heart and mind of Saul of Tarsus, Asch pictures the larger discordant elements separating orthodox Judaism and the growing Christian community. As they are resolved in Paul to bring to his harassed soul peace and harmony and active good will, so, suggests the author, may the strained relations between Jew and Christian be eased.

It is not alone in the person of Paul that the problem of reconciliation

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

is posed and solved. Asch faces it directly as he defines the difference between the two faiths and the cause of their conflict. It is not easy to explain, for instance, what marks the separation between Rabbi Gamaliel—just and kind and of infinite wisdom—and James, who utters the Christlike petition in behalf of Saul as he goes abroad hunting down the Christians. Once the author gives the answer in this fashion:

If for the Jews the belief in the Messiah was the continuity of their old religion, a fulfillment of Prophetic messages, and a miracle for which they had long waited, for the gentiles it was a completely new birth. God had breathed a new soul into them. The old life of impurity fell away, and a new life began for them. They felt that for the sake of their portion in the Messiah it was incumbent on them to guard their lives from uncleanness, and to practice the virtues which the Messiah had taught. Love, devotion, and faith were the commandments and virtues; this was their law, as binding upon them as *their* law upon the Jews.⁹

When the Jews look upon the gentiles as strangers who have broken into the Father's house to steal their inheritance, Asch has Paul patiently explain that only the circumcised *in heart* can enter into the Kingdom. When the elderly Rabbi Sosthenes suffers at the hands of Corinthian Christians, he and Paul *together* achieve a spirit of love and forgiveness that melts dissension between the two congregations. Often the Apostle's preaching of the Messiah seems to the Jews like a call to false worship, and then again they watch with awe as the love of Christ transforms old pagans and sanctifies their homes. In every pagan city the Jewish community is like an oasis; without a synagogue Paul cannot begin his ministry. Ever proud of his heritage, he writes his Epistle to the Hebrews as a Jew to the Jews, picturing the Messiah as the eternal High Priest. And in the end Asch portrays the Jews suffering with the Christians for the burning of Rome, the Romans not being able to distinguish Christian from Jew as both worship Jehovah God, both refuse to bow to Caesar, and both die with the triumphant Shema upon their lips. It is the old Jewish Rabbi to whom Asch gives the last word when the worshipers gather on the Sabbath after the execution of Peter and Paul:

See you not what has happened in Rome? The more they burn the believers in the Messiah, the more they fling them to the beasts, the mightier grow their numbers. Behold! Rome went forth against Jerusalem with the sword, and Jerusalem went forth against Rome with the spirit. The sword conquered for a while, but the spirit conquers for ever!¹⁰

The picture of Paul the Apostle is strong and convincing against

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 345-346.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 804.

the background of the young Christian Church and the religion of Israel that has given it birth. In his undertaking of reconciliation Sholem Asch has exercised in his choice of hero an urgency akin to that of Jesus in his parable of the Good Samaritan. His hero is not only a Christian but an intensely devout Jew who has experienced a conversion to the new faith. So sensitively has he penetrated into the mind of Paul that the reader marvels how this writer, a Jew, can so sympathetically interpret the Christian belief. The perceptive reader will see other lines, inherent and significant. If one Jew can understand one Christian, cannot the matter be multiplied indefinitely—and reversed? Cannot the two stand shoulder to shoulder in a world braced against them?

III. *Mary*, 1949

Mary, the third novel of the trilogy, is the story of the mother of Jesus from her betrothal to Joseph to the Crucifixion and Resurrection of her Son. Throughout the entire story Asch continues his effort toward reconciliation of Jew and Christian. Let it be granted, he seems to suggest, that Jesus was "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," and let the reader then look at the Son through the eyes of Mary, who with the tenderness and understanding of a mother can never stop loving her child. But it was Jehovah's choice of this mother, the author is stressing, which most surely indicates the interdependence of Judaism and Christianity. It was Mary, the Jewish maiden, who was selected for the holy task, and it was the Hebrew Joseph who served as earthly father. Together they directed the Lad of Nazareth in his crucial formative years.

Perhaps because of the venerable position of father in the Jewish home, the reader looks first at Joseph. Asch portrays him as the son of a formerly wealthy member of the House of David who had fled before the wrath of Herod to take sanctuary in the wilds of the Judean hills. Thus Joseph has known poverty, willingly allowing the honor of the ancestral heritage to merge into the hope of welcoming a Redeemer. His carpenter's skill has made him feel like God's partner in creation, and his innate gentleness and humility lead him to seek out the lowliest of men that he may alleviate their burdens with the hope of the coming of the Messiah.

Asch describes Joseph's dismay in hearing the ugly talk about Mary after their betrothal. Without waiting to consult her, he unhesitatingly assumes the guilt, knowing full well that he will bring upon himself disrepute. Unable to comprehend Mary's joy in her conception, yet unwilling to accuse her of wrong, he relinquishes his dream of building his

house with her in Israel and silently prepares to leave Nazareth. Then it is that Asch, utilizing the Gospel narrative, has a vision come to him revealing the plan of God, and Joseph answers: "I submit. . . . How shall I thank Thee, O my God, my heavenly Father, that Thou hast found me worthy to be a guardian to her."¹¹ From him the author has the Child Jesus learn that true cleanliness is of the heart and that real wealth is not measured in ornaments or gold. He pictures in Joseph no rebellion against death when it approaches; he fervently thanks the Lord that he has been permitted to fulfill his own appointed task.

By all human measures, Joseph is portrayed as worthy to serve as earthly guardian for his sacred charge. But with Mary the reader encounters mundane grace and something more. Asch indicates at once a serene beauty in the atmosphere surrounding her who is to be the mother of Jesus. The home where she lives with her widowed mother is a place of benediction for all who enter. Within the plain limestone walls Hannah, as Asch names her, and her daughter devoutly perform all the customary sacred duties and with willing hearts go about the daily chores. Making no attempt to by-pass the miraculous, the author pictures the maiden as one whose religious fervor has already caused her to see visions and hear voices.

After the angel's visitation Asch envelopes Mary with an aura of sanctity. One of the most moving scenes in the novel concerns the reaction of the intimate little group about her as she sings the Magnificat in the mountain retreat of Elizabeth and the dumb Zachariah. Being already great with child, Mary has come here with faithful Joseph, who has witnessed on their journey a miraculous protection from wild beasts as Mary lay sleeping unafraid, a creation of Asch's which recalls the early apocryphal birth stories. Now, as Mary sings the Magnificat, the air of the cave is charged with a spirit not of this world. The listeners are afraid to move "lest their gross flesh impinge on the invisible convocation of souls by which they felt themselves surrounded." Only Zachariah dared to break the silence as he

in a sudden spasm of uncontrollable exultation tore himself loose from his wall, ripped down the curtain at the mouth of the cave, and bellowed across to the mountains, into the night, the inhuman cry of the dumb.

It faded, inarticulate and echo-borne, from range to range—the first annunciation to the world of the Messiah's coming.¹²

To Mary's contact with the spiritual world Asch adds a novel touch

¹¹ *Mary*, translated by Leo Steinberg, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1949, p. 54.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

reminiscent of apocryphal literature as he gives her the power to transmute flowers and odors. Thus during her pregnancy she noticed that people and plants and flowers appeared to her in the light of their true value, not as they seemed to others. Taddi the tanner, one of Asch's most successful imaginary characters, was goodhearted and spiritually sensitive, but all knew that the stench of soaking animal hides hovering in his house was almost too strong for a visitor to endure. Now, however, when Mary approached his dwelling, her "nostrils dilated pleasantly, as though the tanner had been soaking his skins in sweet-smelling oils."¹³ The garden of the Edomite incense planter, on the other hand, had the odor of burning brimstone, because his incense was sold for idol worship. Cactuses did not prick Mary's feet, and nettles had the softness of moss; but the iris field of the Edomite suffocated her so that a heavenly visitor was sent to rescue her from the powers of darkness that would have prevented the birth of her child.

There are times when Mary is denied divine assistance. In a very real sense Asch has the Jewish mother struggle toward her glory, from the day of her acceptance of God's grace to the maturity of her strength when she is willing for her Son to be led to Calvary. She experiences a growing love for her child and cries out to God to be allowed to accompany him to the end of his earthly days. The prayer is granted, but never is the sacrifice demanded of her an easy one. Then Jesus reaches manhood and the sign is given him to begin his ministry. Still the author has him tarry, awaiting his mother's willingness for him to set his foot upon the path of pain and death. Stubbornly her mother-love stands in his way—in the way of the world's redemption—until she finally understands that to shield him would be to deprive the broken-hearted of consolation and the poor of hope. Asch makes it plain that Mary does not have to be a witness at the Cross but that, rejecting the chance to be spared the agony, she conquers personal cowardice to take her place at Golgotha, praying humbly, "Father, let me stand by his altar. Stripped of Thy grace, let me be no more than his mother."¹⁴

It is understandable that the story of Mary must be also that of her Son. Asch pictures a tender, beautiful relationship between mother and child. *Tinoki*¹⁵ she called her baby, and "Tinoki, Tinoki," she called to him softly when he appears before the wondering apostles who sit grieving

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

¹⁵ *Tinoki* is the Hebrew word for *baby*.

over his death. The author has the eyes of the little boy alert to everything about him and his lips forever asking questions: What is sin? Why do animals kill for food? Why must a lamb be offered for sacrifice? Will God ever change the hearts of men? Does God not also love the gentiles? It is this inexhaustible spiritual curiosity which distinguished Jesus from his younger brother James, who accepted without question the teaching of the synagogue school and never dilly-dallied on the way home. Asch makes this burning desire *to know* the cause of the twelve-year-old Lad's lingering in Jerusalem among the doctors of the Temple. It is spiritual hunger which culminates in his perfect knowledge of the Kingdom of God.

This third novel of Sholem Asch's New Testament trilogy attempts the incredibly difficult feat of rehearsing one more time the Christian gospel, tuning it, moreover, to his original commitment: the manifestation of Israel's value. In Mary's selection for divine favor Asch affirms this merit. The flower of Jewish womanhood, she has been chosen as the Mother of Our Lord, her grief and glory pictured as she watches her Son steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Whenever the author has felt the need of an addition from folklore, tradition, the Apocrypha, or from his own fertile imagination, he has used the material without apology. The portion of the story dealing with the coming of Mary and Joseph to the inn in Bethlehem and the birth of the Child in the stable deserves a place with the loveliest of our yuletide classics. Asch is not writing primarily for historical accuracy; he is concerned with telling in words of mystic beauty the story of a woman about whom the world really knows very little. This he does reverently and well.

Thus the New Testament trilogy stands completed: *The Nazarene*, *The Apostle*, and *Mary*—one work to bind together Jew and Christian, to "set forth . . . the merit of Israel, whom Thou hast elected to bring the light of the faith to the nations of the world . . ." With the simplicity of the original Gospel accounts the narrative unfolds in *The Nazarene*, elaborated, however, in the weird and ingenious framework of the Wandering Jew legend. *The Apostle* dispenses with all artificial structure in the most direct treatment of all as Paul gathers within himself the insurgent elements and achieves the victory. It is a solid book infinitely worth the effort demanded of a willing reader. Asch then concludes the trilogy with the tender and lovely portrait of Mary. His moving appeal throughout the three books for the interdependence of Judaism and Christianity may well fulfill the author's hope of a mutual understanding that will lead to a better world.

Some Ambiguities in Biblical Theology

WINSTON L. KING

THE TERM, "BIBLICAL THEOLOGY" is almost as vague as the term, "liberalism." Just as one man's liberalism is another's conservatism, so one biblical theologian's theology may not be sufficiently biblical for another, or the other's biblicism sufficiently theological for the first. This was quite evident, among other places, in last Winter's issue of this periodical, where some pointed out that there was no one biblical theology and one writer raised the question, "Is there a 'Biblical Theology'?"

Here I shall use the term to represent only a general tendency among numbers of contemporary biblical scholars. This prevailing direction may be characterized in general as letting the Bible "speak for itself" in its own terms. It would view the Bible from the "inside out" rather than judge it by viewpoints external to it—viewpoints that liberal Christianity has tended to mingle and confuse with the biblical viewpoint. The over-all mood of this group is to reassert the "biblical" view of faith and life, both as unique and definitive for Christians, over against pagan and modern views of religion and morality. It is the duty of the church, writes one of this persuasion, "to show her people that as Christians they have a view of reality which comes from nowhere but the Gospel."¹

From among this group I have taken two of its outstanding proponents. For this discussion I shall consider them as at least partially representative of the "biblical theological" viewpoint and as agreeing with each other, despite any minor differences between them. They are: Bernhard W. Anderson in his *Rediscovering the Bible*; ² G. Ernest Wright in *God Who Acts* and *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*,³ also in his article, "Progressive Revelation," in the March 1956 *Christian Scholar*. I shall outline my difficulties with their interpretations under four headings.

¹ Swenson, Esther, "A Babble of Voices" in *McCormick Speaking*, January, 1956.

² Association Press, 1951.

³ Numbers 8 and 2, respectively, in *Studies in Biblical Theology*, Alec Allenson, 1952 and 1950.

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I. IS THE BIBLE A UNITY?

The most nearly universal characteristic of biblical theologians is their emphasis upon the "unity" of the Bible. Since Professor Branton has dealt at some length with this,⁴ I shall touch on it only briefly and in general agreement with him.

Biblical theologians avoid the old fundamentalist pattern of insisting on the plenary inspiration even of the breathing marks in the original text and of forcing Genesis, Ecclesiastes, Amos, John, and the Apocalypse to speak in complete and detailed agreement with each other. The unity is rather of a "dynamic sort," as suggested by Professor Brown,⁵ and is sought in the unfolding meaning of God's covenant and revelation to Israel, both Old and New.

As a protest against the complete atomism of some types of historical criticism of the Bible, which seem to suggest a whole series of different religions in the Bible, or stratified and compartmentalized periods of religious life and thought without organic relation to each other, this emphasis is justified. But I would note, also in accord with Branton, that there is danger of biblical theologians imposing upon the Bible a greater degree of unity than is there—in a neo-fundamentalist manner. Not all Scripture—some of it rather incidentally or even accidentally included in the canon—claims to be "inspired," despite II Timothy 3:16. Nor can any stretch of the imagination, secular or sacred, really call the "religion" of Ecclesiastes, which insists that man is mortal as is the beast, the "same" as that of One who says, "because I live, you shall live also," or of the apocalypticist who promises liars and others an eternally reserved seat in the lake of fire; nor harmonize "Go, utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites" with "love thine enemy"; nor make Genesis' God who walks in the garden in the cool of the day identical with the Heavenly King, "immortal, invisible." And so on ad infinitum.

Though biblical theologians, be it repeated, do not seek literal and direct accord, there is a tendency among them to play down differences in the Bible, which is as distortive in its way as the atomistic method. Thus the Wisdom literature is largely left to one side in their treatments; and Professor Wright, in his *Old Testament Against Its Environment*, tends constantly to take as "characteristically Hebrew" the *later* passages, such

⁴ Branton, James R., "Our Present Situation in Biblical Theology," *RELIGION IN LIFE*, Winter 1956-1957.

⁵ Brown, Robert McAfee, "Is There a 'Biblical Theology'?", same issue.

as the Song of Moses and Psalm 82, thereby implying their unity with the "original" revelation.⁶

This, then, is my first difficulty. Can one speak of *the* biblical viewpoint or religion coherently or consistently, without inviting a justified rejoinder: "*Which* biblical viewpoint or religious attitude?" A theological axe is being so loudly ground here that the Bible is not allowed to speak for itself.⁷

II. IS THERE "PROGRESSIVE REVELATION" IN THE BIBLE?

The foregoing leads directly to our second question: If the differences of viewpoint in the Bible are obvious, even to the biblical theologian, how then are they to be explained? I find the biblical theologian unclear at this point. Professor Brown hopes that we will not succumb to "the evolutionistic views of 'progressive revelation' so popular a couple of decades ago."⁸ And in the pages of Professor Anderson's book I find these words:⁹

Applied to religious knowledge, the evolutionary interpretation found expression in the idea of "progressive revelation." [An evil, evil word in our author's mind.] That is to say, God works immanently within the historical process, revealing his timeless truths up to man's ability to understand; on man's side, this progressive illumination yields increasing "discovery" or expanding "insight." The Bible allegedly gives evidence of such progress. The religion of Moses is said to be comparatively primitive. But under the influence of prophetic "genius," crude and barbarous elements were gradually removed, until Jesus finally came as the great discoverer of God and teacher of the loftiest ethical principles.

Thus is the erring daughter Progressive Revelation publicly cast out of the front door of Orthodoxy as pregnant with man-made error. "Never darken the threshold of the Christian religion again, false daughter of the faith!" seem to be the words we hear flung after her in thunderous tones.

But, lo! Who is this brought in by the servants' entrance later in the same volume, when the reader is looking the other way?¹⁰

It is a common human experience that the years bring a deepening understanding of the meaning of a personal commitment. . . . The life history of an individual is comparable to the life history of a people. . . . Through all of these generations, as the Covenant was given new application in new historical crises, there was a maturing understanding of the will of God. . . . As we shall see, the prophets gave Israel a

⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 30 ff., 43 ff.

⁷ In fairness to Professor Wright, I do not find him insisting on *the* biblical viewpoint. This is more characteristic of John Hutchison's *Faith, Reason, and Existence*, for example.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 34. I am unable to determine whether Professor Brown is a "biblical theologian" or not. His ambiguous title, "*Is There a 'Biblical Theology'?*" suggests that he is lulling our suspicions to sleep in order to bore from within—and his views bear out this interpretation.

⁹ Anderson, B. W., *Rediscovering the Bible*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

deeper insight into the meaning and implication of the relationship between God and his people. They found in the Covenant both a basis for condemning social injustice and a motivation for ethical obligation. Thus the advancing years brought a deepening understanding of God's will and a higher understanding of how men should serve him.

It is a far cry from Joshua, claiming to serve God by ruthlessly annihilating his enemies, to the time when Christian missionaries went out into the uttermost parts of the earth to preach the gospel of the Cross.

"Amen!" say I, and with hearty good will. But how strange to read these words by the author of the previous quotation! Is this not that false fallen daughter Progressive Revelation, apparently cleansed by some magic words like "in the same framework" said over her, or clothed in the mantle of "essentially the same principle"? From what source, by what standard, does the biblical theologian pronounce the new understanding of this fallen woman to be "matured" or "deepened" or "higher"? The Bible's or his own? For my money this mysteriously shrouded damsel is the same hussy as was cast out the front door, and child she is to bear—call it "Higher, Deeper Understanding" or "Progressive Revelation, Jr."—is the same child. The only difference is that the first time the hussy was honest in sin and the second time she is hypocritical in her purity.

III: CAN BIBLICAL FACT BE DISTINGUISHED FROM POETRY AND BIBLICAL HISTORY FROM ITS INTERPRETATION?

We now move into an area where it seems to me that some of the biblical theologians hopelessly blur already difficult distinctions, those between "fact" and "poetry," and between history and its interpretation.

Let us acknowledge with them at the beginning that "facts," whatever they are, have a cultural-personal context which gives them meanings varying with the culture in which they are found; and that in some cases this leads to differing modes of perception and reportage. Let us also acknowledge that the history of a period must always be written from a specific viewpoint, faith, or *Weltanschauung*, which provides the key to the inclusion of some facts and the exclusion of others, or to the proportion given different aspects.

To say this, however, is *not* equivalent to saying that there is no difference at all between fact and imaginative reconstruction or between history and its interpretation, or that the lines of distinction may be arbitrarily moved at a moment's notice. I have great difficulty, therefore, with the following statement of Wright's:¹¹ "The inference [to God's activity] was an interpretation of an event, which to Israel became an

¹¹ Wright, G. E., *God Who Acts*, p. 50.

integral part of the event and which thus could be used for the comprehension of subsequent events." When an inference (that it was *God* acting) becomes "part of the event," which, because of what this interpreted event tells of God, enables us to forecast the future and interpret it, we seem to be moving in a circle.

Or again, this from Anderson:¹²

Of course, some of us insist that the biblical account might have been written differently if a modern observer, equipped with the knowledge which science has given, had been at the scene of the so-called miracle. This theorizing cannot change the fact that none of us were at the scene, while those who were involved in the events testified that extraordinary things had taken place. . . .

Since past events cannot be brought into the laboratory of the present for examination, it would seem best to approach the question of miracle not from the standpoint of a modern prejudice, but from the standpoint of the historical evidence itself.

At least two things are wrong with this statement. One, we are not certain that many of the biblical statements *are* eye-witness accounts. The account of the creation, for example; or of the plagues in Egypt, apparently much expanded in our version; etc., etc. And why should a modern view, "equipped with the knowledge that science has given," be called a "prejudice," when the words of a possible eye-witness—or maybe a later editor—written from *his* viewpoint are called "historical evidence"?

Nor am I reassured when I observe biblical theologians dealing with some of the events related in the Bible, even though they fervently remind us that Christianity is a "historically grounded" faith. I will take a few examples. The first is relative to Moses' call:¹³

Knowing that we are dealing with a story which in its written form is much later than Moses' time, and knowing furthermore that in the Old Testament faith finds expression in the rich imagery of oriental symbolism, we should not fall into the error of rationalizing this as a portrayal of something which took place objectively, as though the burning bush could have been pictured with a movie camera or the Voice recorded by a phonograph had someone been around with these modern instruments. To ask the question "Did this happen just as it is described?" betrays our inability to understand the Hebraic mode of thinking, which makes no sharp distinction between what we would call the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective, the world of imagination and the realm of hard fact. . . . Of course God did not actually reveal himself in fire; but how could the truth be stated more vividly . . . ?

In the same vein, Wright, with regard to the thunderings and lightnings at Sinai, tell us: "To historicize such images in such a way as to make one assume that Sinai was actively volcanic, and therefore to be sought

¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

in Arabia" is as foolish as to institute a search for "the mountains that melted like wax when Yahweh passed over the hills of the earth," as recorded in Psalms 29:6. Or to assume that the expression in a Psalm, "Lebanon danced like a wild bull," indicates *its* volcanic nature.¹⁴ Throughout Wright's work, indeed, is a tendency to "spiritualize" all anthropomorphisms relating to God.

The third instance has to do with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Dr. Anderson says that Christianity saw that:¹⁵ "If the birth, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ were not real, then God did not really reveal himself in history! . . . [But] The question as to what happened on Easter morning lies out on the fringe." There seems to be a distinction here between the centrally and the peripherally real which escapes me.

But again:¹⁶ "The idea of Jesus being carried 'up' to heaven on a cloud is hardly tenable today, except in the symbolic sense that Jesus was exalted to 'the right hand of God' as Lord. The Ascension, like the second coming of Jesus on the clouds, belongs in another dimension than our physical senses can describe."

Now after a series of statements of this sort, I, for one, am confused about what historical fact means for the biblical theologian. As I understand his intention, it is to take history very "seriously"; he constantly reiterates that Judeo-Christianity finds its revelation in "historical event." But, in the light of the above statements, what *is* historical event? Is it something which happens in a physically perceptible way in a space-time context, or is it an event in the human mind? Where does "fact" end and "interpretation" begin? I agree with Branton that biblical theology frequently seems to lose all real rootage in history.

It may well be true that happenings become history only when they are recognized as part of some plan or purposive scheme—in this case as they are determined by God's will. But there must be *happenings* for the human mind to weave into its histories. In the light of the oriental lack of distinction between inner and outer, fact and fancy—emphasized by one of the above writers—I find the insistent reiteration of the "historical" quality of biblical religion highly ambiguous in the biblical theologian's mouth. And I wonder how much different it is from the oriental mysticisms of an a-historical or nonhistorical temper, from which they are so anxious to distinguish Judeo-Christianity.

¹⁴ *God Who Acts*, note p. 47; also *The Old Testament Against Its Environment*, note 19, p. 21, quoting J. Pedersen.

¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 216.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

I am told that such imaginative symbolism applies only to the *details* of these events. That is, Moses *was* called, but the burning bush is only a figure of speech; there *was* a Sinai covenant, but the thunder and lightning are merely symbols of divine majesty, not evidence of volcanic action. Again I ask: Where does the fact end and the interpretation begin? If the oriental mind mixes the two indistinguishably, and the biblical theologian insists that fact and interpretation are one in the Bible, how do we know that there was even an Exodus, a Covenant, a Conquest, or a consecutive history? If taking history seriously simply means that we say that *God* was acting in it, why will not purely symbolic figures of speech do here, rather than *events* of any sort? Or if we must accept uncritically the biblical statement that God was acting in this or that event, and say that historical details are unimportant, then how have we any check at all on historical accuracy? By definition *God* can do anything.

I would suggest that it is greedy of the biblical theologians to try to have their historical cake—i.e., an established historical scheme of revelatory events—and swallow it too in a kind of mystification which prevents critics of the historical accuracy of the scheme from getting at it. It appears that they use “historical” in a double sense: when historical events are in historical doubt, “historical” means *sacred* history, i.e., the interpretation of an event according to its theological meaning. Whether it ever occurred, save in the minds of the faithful, is unimportant. But at another time, as a safeguard against its dissolution into mystical mythology, the historical event is passionately affirmed to be historically real. Apparently the biblical theologians really prefer historical reality of the ordinary sort, however; for with an avidity matching that of the fundamentalist and with the eagerness of a tenderfoot cowboy grabbing the saddle horn when the horse starts to buck, they seek for archeological verification of the literal truth of biblical accounts wherever possible.

Because of this slipperiness of his basic categories, it is impossible for the biblical theologian to deal with biblical materials honestly or consistently. That there is much poetry in the Bible, anyone but the fundamentalist would agree. That the prophets and Jesus used highly symbolic figures of speech is obvious. But there is nonetheless a kind of seriousness and literalness about the Bible, which, if it is to “speak for itself,” must be recognized. I would hazard the opinion that the writers of Genesis really thought that God actually appeared physically to Adam and Eve, spoke to them in a voice which a phonograph could record, and that the heavenly visitors really supped with Abraham; that the New Testament Christians believed that

Jesus would literally come down again on the literal clouds of heaven. And if the Bible is to be treated honestly, *these* facts must also be recognized.

Therefore it is somewhat fatuous to ask us, as the biblical theologian does, to put ourselves in the position of the biblical writers, sit where they sit, see things as they see them. Nor in the name of truth ought we to do so. We must enter sympathetically into their viewpoint in order to understand what they tried to say. But we must judge its meaning for us and its truth, according to *our* understanding of the world as we perceive it today—with due awareness of the particularity of our own viewpoint. Nor does the biblical theologian, for all his brave talk, do otherwise. When he says that "the idea of Jesus being carried 'up' to heaven on a cloud is hardly tenable today," he shows that he too cannot escape a "modern" judgment. *I* will be satisfied if he does not try to make out that it is also untenable for me to think that the biblical writer really thought it *did* happen that way.

IV. DOES GOD'S MORAL CHARACTER CHANGE?

This is the aspect of biblical theology which troubles me most. I seem to find in it echoes of a fundamentalism which would assert that everything that the Bible says God did, he did, but which also maintains that he has been and still is both unchangingly holy and good. Let us examine a particular instance of this in the article in which Professor Wright deals with the Old Testament story of God's threat to raise up evil in his own house for David, after his sin with Bathsheba. He writes:¹⁷

Our author is grappling with the complexities of history and he is attempting to understand their meaning. The clue to his procedure is not to be found in "spiritualizing," but simply in his attempt to comprehend what is. The stuff of his theology is the stuff of history. He does not ask how a good God could do this or that. What has happened, has happened and an attempt must be made to understand it, whether it is pretty or not. One does not begin with preconceived ideas of what God can or cannot do, but one tries to interpret what happened. Such a procedure will not lend itself to the construction of a coherent and convenient system of belief about God and the world.

"The stuff of his theology is the stuff of history." (I might raise here again the query as to what "history" means, but forbear.) "What has happened, has happened," and the biblical writer tries to understand it. This sounds honest and forthright as a statement, but it is not. For the biblical writer did not proceed empirically to study history. He had *his* preconceived ideas about how to achieve a "coherent and convenient system of belief" for himself. He believed that everything that happened was

¹⁷ Wright, G. E., "Progressive Revelation" in *The Christian Scholar*, March, 1956, p. 63.

God's deed, or by his permission. Therefore whatever was, was God's will, though conceived in a dynamic rather than static sense. For him all happenings were God's acts, personally directed by him to bless or punish mankind. If two she-bears ate up forty-two children because they remarked on Elisha's baldness, that was their divine punishment for irreverence; when a famine occurred, God was angry because David had taken a census. This is not the stuff of history in its raw state, but a thoroughly worked-over and interpreted view of history, against which Job had much to say.

Now the result of such an approach to the ethical and religious categories is chaotic. One cannot say anything about what God is like, ethically, with any confidence at all. God may do the most astounding things, geared to the particular occasion, without any universality or consistency of meaning of any sort. He may be ready to kill Moses because Moses has not circumcised his son, but later say, through Paul, that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything in his sight. God may operate by a "teleological suspension of the ethical" (to us a Kierkegaardian phrase) in a way that makes hash of all consistent ethical experience and funded human wisdom. Justice is one thing in one age and another thing in another. Is it that God has changed, either in nature or in revelation? or that man's ideas of him have "progressed"?—O vile word! Biblical theologians refuse to admit either pattern of thought. Who, then, is this God of the biblical theologians? How may he be apprehended? What is his will? Has the biblical message no consonance with other human experience or insight; or in neo-fundamentalist manner must we say that God is and does what the Bible says he was and did, period?

It seems to me that the Bible itself does not easily accord itself to this treatment. In particular, notice the Hebrew prophets. They did not operate by universalized logical forms, to be sure, but certainly by a kind of intended universalistic ethical cogency. The essence of their accomplishments for religion was the linking of ethical universality and dependability with the character of God. Though they speak each to the conditions of his own day, I find in them no suggestion that the righteousness which they call for may be out of fashion day after tomorrow, that God will manifest himself differently then. Justice meant honest dealing in commerce, faithfulness in personal relationships, respect for those of lesser social or financial status, and truth-telling under all circumstances. All nations alike will be judged by this impartial plumbline of God's justice. And though the judgment will fall *more* heavily on Israel and Judah because of their special calling, it is essentially the *same* judgment, qualitatively speaking.

In short, while Amos did not work out a fully systematic definition of justice, he did apply his basic concepts as consistently, rationally, and as cogently as his understanding permitted. His categories of judgment still have meaning for us because they speak to generic human situations and consonantly with much of our common moral experience, *not* because they represent some mysteriously immediate judgment of Yahweh, incapable of significant relation to any extrabiblical moral insights or experiences. Indeed when Professor Anderson discusses the relevance of Amos' message for today, he sounds so much like a liberal Christian universalizing and applying Amos' judgments to our contemporary society that, blindfolded, I could not distinguish him from such: the powerful ought not to order society to their own selfish interests; the church ought not to sanction the status quo, especially its racial segregation; national policies ought to be checked by some standard other than nationalistic interests.

It is quite true that religion is something more than "mere" morality and that all sorts of relativities enter into ethical standards. But neither can religion ever be *less* than *merely* moral according to our best contemporary standards. Christianity cannot follow a pattern of ethics which makes sense or has application only *within* the faith; or which may be radically and unaccountably changed from situation to situation by means of a theological "suspension" of ethical standards. The New Testament urges Christians to commend themselves to *all* men in a better-than-average practice of the "average" virtues of kindness, honesty, and loving concern. *Thus*, and not alone by strange religious fervor, would men know they were Christ's disciples.

In conclusion let me very briefly sum up my case. In an attempt—overzealous I think—to prove the absolute uniqueness of the Judeo-Christian faith, biblical theologians have forced the Bible to speak with a unity which it does not possess, and tried to force Christian thinking into conformity with all too many of the untenable features of the so-called biblical perspective. In trying to avoid the Scylla of an adamant fundamentalist literalism on the right hand and the Charybdis of an all-engulfing liberal relativism on the left, they have confused historical interpretation with historical fact and chaotically scrambled the clearest religious and moral insights of both Old and New Testaments. And finally, by their insistence upon achieving a view of reality "which comes nowhere but from the Gospel," they render significant conversation with those of differing viewpoint—especially the ungodly—completely impossible.

Theological Landmarks in the Revival Under Wesley

ROBERT E. CUSHMAN

I. DOCTRINE COMES TO LIFE

THOMAS COKE and Henry Moore, in the introduction to their *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, directed this sober and challenging word "to the preachers of the Gospel, late in connection with John Wesley":

The God of this world has hitherto triumphed over every revival of true religion. Yet the gates of hell have never wholly prevailed. The Lord has raised up another holy temple out of the scattered living stones of the once beautiful building. And this he will do again, if those who now serve him 'leave their first love.'"¹

Then speaking directly to the successors of Wesley in the gospel, Coke and Moore continue: "On you it chiefly rests, whether the present revival shall continue, and keep its rank in that universal spread of righteousness, which we expect from the sure word of prophecy, when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord."²

Whether Coke and Moore's words, following hard upon the death of Wesley in 1791, already disclose misgivings about the future of the revival is a fair question, which, however, cannot detain us here. Also I leave aside the question whether, in Methodism of mid-twentieth-century America, "the God of this world" has contrived to bank the fires of that living faith which gave earlier Methodists their identity and reason for being. I leave that too aside for a prior question, one that has often been asked and just as often deserves a fresh answer; namely, what was it that lighted the fire of the revival under the Wesleys and kept it burning for at least a century? What was it in the thought and experience of the early Methodists that made them channels of a new and living movement within Christianity? Or, better, what was it that they recovered out of historic

¹ Coke and Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, Philadelphia, 1793, p. v.

² *Ibid.*

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Christian tradition which made them fit instruments of the grace of God?

These are suitable questions, for it is a solid lesson of Church history that every *bona fide* revival within historic Christianity has been, in good part, a recapturing of authentic elements of Christian faith—those which in the course of time have fallen out of focus, lapsed, or been obstructed by either narrowing orthodoxy or encroaching institutionalism.

Coke and Moore seem to allude to this fact in referring to the scattered but "still living stones" of the once coherent structure that, lying scattered, may need again and again to be reassembled into the balanced edifice of reformed Christian faith and life. In their eyes the then recent revival under Wesley was no exception to our generalization. It was a gathering up, setting in place, of stones which the builders of Restoration Anglicanism had rejected. These stones were fundamental ingredients of Christian faith and experience. Wesley himself always protested they were firmly fixed in the *Articles of Religion* and the *Homilies* of the Church of England.³ Nevertheless, they were consistently ignored, and he had to cut them again out of that quarry of all revitalized Christianity, the Bible.

Wesley indeed called himself *homo unius libri*, a man of one book.⁴ How little he is to be taken literally and how vast was his literary coverage, both his *Journal* and his massive editing labors show. Nevertheless, he was *homo unius libri* in this respect that, after 1730, by his own account, the Bible was for him the standard of Christian doctrine and life. The adoption of this standpoint by John and Charles Wesley may deserve to be considered the first positive step in the direction of the revival that was to come. For it is true to say that the revival, which had its decisive beginning some years later in 1738, consisted, at the core, in a living experiential recovery of biblical faith. Thus, in his *Short History of Methodism* (1764), and referring to the early Oxford Methodists, Wesley declares:

They were all zealous members of the Church of England; not only tenacious of all her doctrines, so far as they knew them, but of all her discipline, to the minutest circumstance. . . . But they observed neither these nor anything else any farther than they conceived it was bound upon them by their one book, the Bible; it being their one desire and design to be downright Bible Christians; taking the Bible, as interpreted by the Primitive Church and our own, for their whole and sole rule.⁵

When, therefore, we look for the genesis of the revival and for foundational and moving causes, we should take careful notice of the vigorous return to the biblical standard of faith and practice by the Oxford

³ Cf. *Journal*, II, 274f.; *Sermons*, "On God's Vineyard," i, 4.

⁴ *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1777), *Works*, ed. Emory, New York, 1831, VI, 488.

⁵ *A Short History of Methodism* (1764), *Works*, V, 246.

Methodists. Anyone acquainted in whatever degree with the controversial literature of English theology between the Restoration and 1738, when the revival got under way, will know that deistic rationalism, natural religion, and philosophical ethics had well-nigh usurped the place of the Bible and historic Protestant doctrine within the precincts of the Church. There is, moreover, little doubt that the eighteenth-century revival, both in England and America, was a powerful answer—probably the really effective one—to the rationalistic emaciation of Christian faith and life that had weakened religion for half a century.

In probing for the roots of the revival, then, it is reckless disregard of the evidence to treat slightly the fact that Oxford Methodism and the recovery of the Word of God in Holy Scripture went hand in hand. Biblical Christianity was, in this period, not only under attack from without, it had been for some years on the wane within the Anglican establishment. This obvious point, together with the reversal of the tendency by the Methodists, is too little attended to by the historians of that “surprising work of grace” in the eighteenth century. Implied in it was a most emphatic protest, from within the Church, against the substitution of philosophy and ethics for the faith and doctrine of the Bible.

However, the return of the Oxford Methodists to the Bible was not a return to dead literalism and the worship of the text. It is undoubtedly true that Wesley accepted something like plenary inspiration of the Scriptures.⁶ His work was done long before the task of critical Bible study was fairly begun. Nevertheless, Wesley was far from making Christian faith consist in believing all that is written in Old or New Testament. “This the devils believe,” he said, “and yet still for all this faith, they are but devils; they remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the true Christian faith.”⁷ What, then, is the true faith according to Wesley? His answer is plain:

The true Christian faith is not only to believe the Holy Scriptures and the articles of our faith; but also to have “a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ” whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments. And this faith neither any devil hath, nor any wicked man.⁸

What this means for Wesley is that the Bible doctrine of salvation through Christ is known to be true when, and only when, it is experienced as true. Wesley was a man of one book because he found, and innumerable

⁶ *Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, Works, VI, 554; and *The Character of a Methodist*, Works, V, 240.

⁷ *The Principles of a Methodist* (1740), Works, V, 256.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 256-257.

others under his preaching found, that the redemption of man, his justification by and reconciliation to God through Christ, as witnessed to in Holy Scripture, could and did have abundant representation in the present experience of men. The Bible promises verified themselves by coming to life in the recurring response of men and women touched by the power of the Word.

The Word was life. It came to life under the power of the Holy Spirit. Doctrines of the New Testament—justification, new birth, sanctification—took on flesh and blood in the lives of individuals. Here was visible and ample experiential proof of the truth of Scripture. And it was in this context that Wesley was able to distinguish between mere assent to the truth of Holy Scripture, which the “devils” might have, and living faith which a man possessed who knew and had “assurance” of new life. It is also in this manner that we are to understand Wesley’s oft-mentioned dismissal of *opinion* and *orthodoxy* in religion.⁹ Even true opinions are empty if their substance is not appropriated in life. For Wesley, true Christian faith is *doctrine* come to life in the soul of man.

A great deal of misleading talk has centered around Wesley’s opening remarks in *The Character of a Methodist*: “The distinguishing marks of a Methodist,” he said, “are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or another, are all quite wide of the point.”¹⁰ In recent times these words have been commandeered by some of Wesley’s nominal successors to depreciate and dismiss any precise doctrinal standards within the Church or to condone a latitudinarianism that opens the doors to all good causes. This, however, is a deceptive and even silly reading of Wesley’s meaning.

Wesley was, to be sure, a foe of *orthodoxy*, that is, the making religion consist in right opinions. In his sermon *On the Trinity* his reasons are clear: “Whatsoever the generality of people think, it is certain that opinion is not religion: no, not right opinion; assent to one, or to ten thousand truths . . . Persons may be quite right in their opinion; and yet have no religion at all; and on the other hand, persons may be truly religious, who hold many wrong opinions.”¹¹ The question is, then, what is religion?

⁹ Cf. *Sermons*, “Foundation of the City Road Chapel” (1777), ii, 17, wherein appears the over-worked sentence: “Whosoever thou art, whose heart is herein as my heart, give me thine hand.” Wherein Wesley also affirms the early fidelity of the Methodists to the *Articles* and *Homilies* of the Church of England, and declares: “Methodism, so-called, is the old religion, the religion of the Bible, the religion of the primitive church, the religion of the Church of England.” ii, 1.

¹⁰ *The Character of a Methodist*, Works, V. 240.

¹¹ *Sermons*, “On the Trinity,” 1. See *Journal*, II, 411, on right opinion as profitless in the absence of the “Christian temper.”

And the answer is undoubted: It is *faith*, justifying and sanctifying faith, which works by love. It is, as Wesley declares, "the faith which enables every true Christian believer to testify with St. Paul, 'The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'"¹²

There is a mine of theology embedded in that witness, and we must shortly ferret it out; but for the moment there is this remaining word. While Wesley is a foe of right opinion as a substitute for living faith, he nevertheless believes that Christian faith implies doctrine, the doctrine of the Bible come to life. But he is equally sure that until doctrine has come to life in appropriating faith, it is empty and profitless to entertain opinions and dispute about them. Opinions do not save, only faith does, through grace. For Wesley, Christian truth is what in some circles today is called existential truth, and until it is appropriated, until it becomes true for me, it is dead orthodoxy. And dead orthodoxy was, indeed, one deadly disease of established religion for which the revival sought to be a cure.

II. FOUR DOCTRINAL PILLARS OF THE REVIVAL

On the occasion of Wesley's first visit to the North and to Epworth, and under the *Journal* dateline, "Wednesday June 9, 1742," the following incident is recorded:

I rode over to a neighbouring town to wait upon a Justice of Peace, a man of candour and understanding; before whom (I was informed) their angry neighbours had carried a whole wagon-load of these new heretics. But when he asked what they had done there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgot. At length one said, 'Why, they pretended to be better than other people; and, besides, they prayed from morning to night.' Mr. S[tovin] asked, 'But have they done nothing besides?' 'Yes, sir,' said an old man: 'an't please your worship, they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! And now she is as quiet as a lamb.' 'Carry them back, carry them back,' replied the Justice, 'and let them convert all the scolds in the town.'¹³

Wesley was single of eye and purpose, absolutely given to the Lord's business, without patience for levity—but not without whimsical sense for the ludicrous. Yet the truth about the revival was that men and women were changed, even gossips and scolds. This was often the unintended witness of its enemies, such as the perplexed husband who deduced his wife had been "convarted" because her vinegar and irrepressible tongue had lapsed.

¹² *Sermons*, "On the Church," 11.

¹³ *Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, ed. N. Curnock, London, 1938, III, 20.

To read Wesley's *Journal* is to have sight of a thousand and one such transformations, and many of them far more spectacular. No one has yet mined for the study of conversion the vast riches of Wesley's *Journal*. I mention conversion here, because no man in the history of Christianity was witness to and a more thorough observer of so much empirical evidence of the power of the Christian proclamation upon human lives. For Wesley, it was the work of God of which he, his brother Charles, and his itinerant preachers were but instruments. Again and again, in the biography of Wesley by Coke and Moore, John Wesley is spoken of only as "the chief and most honored *instrument*" of the great revival of religion.

This gives us our cue: the revival was understood by the revivalists and their earlier successors as a "work of God," an action of the divine grace, and in no sense a contrivance of men save in so far as men became answerable and pliant to the divine working. In this respect the revival was in fact a reassertion of the Reformation watchword, *sola gratia*, by grace alone. Indeed, it was Wesley's recovery of this pillar of Pauline Christianity which precipitated the revival in 1739. But in order to see how this is true, we must consider four basic motifs in the experience and thought of the Wesleys.

While every exact count will be arbitrary, I find four great moments in John Wesley's pilgrimage of faith. Corresponding to them are four great phrases embodying four pivotal doctrines. These are: Christian perfection, justification by faith, radical sinfulness, and faith working by love. By no means do these four phrases represent Wesley's compendium of Christian theology, but they do represent the full cycle of his thought respecting the *nature*, the *obstacle*, and the *way* of salvation.

(1) First, then, let us consider Christian perfection or holiness. In his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1777), Wesley reviews the history of his thought upon the subject. He tells us that from the reading of Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* in the year 1725, he formed an instant resolve: "I resolved to dedicate all my life to God, all my thoughts, and words and actions; being thoroughly convinced, there was no medium, but that every part of my life must either be a sacrifice to God, or myself, that is, in effect to the devil."¹⁴ Further, from a reading of Thomas à Kempis a year later he was impelled to believe that he must yield not only his whole life and action but his whole heart. From the reading of William Law's *Christian Perfection*, Wesley was convinced of "the absolute impossibility of being half a Christian"—a rare and bitter

¹⁴ *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, Works*, VI, 484.

insight indeed! Then, in 1729, Wesley reports that he began "not only to read but to study the Bible," that it became for him "the only standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion."

Then it was that he acquired the conviction never thereafter to be lost, viz., "the indispensable necessity of having 'the mind which was in Christ,' and of 'walking as Christ also walked.'"¹⁵ This conviction, as he himself observes, he enforced in his earliest published sermon preached at St. Mary's Oxford, 1733, under the title "The Circumcision of the Heart." Therein Wesley declared the nature of Christian perfection in terms which ever after were only to be reiterated. He held that "the distinguishing mark" of a true follower of Christ is "a mind and spirit renewed after the image of him that created it."¹⁶ A spirit so renewed is one that loves the Lord its God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, and the neighbor, as a natural consequence.¹⁷ Here we have Wesley's conception of holiness or of Christian perfection, for these are not distinct.

Accordingly, we have the impulse of the Oxford Holy Club, the preaching to prisoners and ministration to the poor and needy, and his mission to Savannah and the Indians. For, as Wesley explains much later in 1777, "this was the light, wherein at this time I generally considered religion as a uniform following of Christ, an entire inward and outward conformity to our Master. Nor was I afraid of anything more, than of allowing myself in any the least disconformity to our grand Exemplar."¹⁸

Although these words regarding conformity of the whole life to Christ as "our grand Exemplar" could have been and, indeed, were used by the moralistic rationalizers of Christianity in the Age of Reason, they possessed for Wesley a rich doctrinal content, not intended by the rationalists. The conformity of the whole life to Christ meant for Wesley "a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God."¹⁹ Christian life, therefore, was for Wesley the restoration of the image of God in man. It was a new and different order of existence, so that it seemed to him in later years that those who attacked Christian perfection were fighting, as he said, "against the image of God" and so depriving the Christian of his birth-right.²⁰

Surely anyone having so exalted a view of the Christian life would

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Cf. further *Plain Account*, 530.

¹⁶ *Sermons*, "The Circumcision of the Heart," 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, i, 11.

¹⁸ *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Works, VI, 484.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 530.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 531. Cf. *Minutes of Some Late Conversations*, I (1744), Works, V, 197.

seem to have good claim of being a Christian. But the story of John and Charles Wesley from the year 1729 to 1738 is the story of disciplined and strenuous effort to attain the goal, yet dogged by an increasingly painful disenchantment respecting human power to achieve it and a progressive consciousness of self-depreciation and impotency. This, indeed, comes to expression in Wesley's bitter confession homeward bound from America, January 24, 1738, on shipboard: "I went to America, to convert the Indians; but oh, who shall convert me? Who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion. I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near. But let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, 'To die is gain.'" ²¹

It is true that Wesley's insights were high and his self-exactions severe and unrelenting, but we should not dismiss his real dilemma. For years he had affirmed that the *whole* life "must be a sacrifice to God, or to myself, that is, in effect, to the devil." And it had become terrifyingly clear that his commitment was really withheld and his life was not entire sacrifice. He could not meet the test: "To die is gain." He was still pledged to himself, in effect, to the devil. He lived in the stark and bitter realization of his impotency. The nature of the Christian life he understood; the way to it he had not found. This was his condition on returning to England in 1738.

(2) Wesley was now ripe for the second and decisive moment in his pilgrimage of faith. Under his *Journal* dateline, "February 7, 1738," is the opening parenthetical phrase that may have been a later insertion—"A day much to be remembered." On that day Wesley met Peter Böhler, the German Moravian. A month later on March 5, finding Böhler in Oxford with his brother Charles, he records these words: "I found my brother at Oxford recovering from his pleurisy; and with him Peter Böhler, by whom (in the hand of the Great God) I was, on Sunday the 5th, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." ²²

From a reading of the *Journal* for the whole spring of 1738 there is no doubt that Wesley had made and appropriated to himself a great discovery. The nature and source of faith was the heart of his new insight. As to its nature, Wesley says under dateline April 22, 1738, "I met with Peter Böhler once more. I had now no objection to what he said of the nature of faith; namely, that it is (to use the words of our Church) 'a sure

²¹ *Journal*, I, 418.

²² *Journal*, I, 442.

trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven and he reconciled to the favour of God.'"²³

This conception of faith, with variations and enlargements, runs through Wesley's every treatment of the subject thereafter. But the full significance of this view of faith rests upon understanding its source and ground; and here we may best rely upon the great manifesto sermon of the revival entitled "Salvation by Faith," which Wesley preached at St. Mary's Oxford, before the University, June 18, 1738. Therein he affirmed that faith is not belief or assent, or "a train of ideas in the head," but "a disposition of the heart." Moreover this disposition presupposes what Christ has done for us, that he was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification. Faith is trusting the work of Christ; first, that our sins are forgiven and, second, that we are reconciled to God's favor. Faith is "recumbancy" upon Christ. It is no trust in ourselves or in our works, but in Christ's working. Christ is the objective ground and cause of faith.

But there is a subjective ground, and here we come closer to faith's basis. "Of yourselves," declares Wesley to the university congregation, "cometh neither your faith nor your salvation: It is a gift of God; the free undeserved gift . . . That ye believe, is one instance of his grace; that believing ye are saved, another . . . For all our works, all our righteousness, which were before our believing, merited nothing of God but condemnation."²⁴ Here is the doctrine of justification by faith alone through grace. It not only dismayed Wesley's university hearers; it was at first received with offence by Charles Wesley and with his severe protest.²⁵

That Wesley had really recovered the Reformation standpoint and put his semi-pelagian religion behind him is clear enough from the evidence that, in January of that year, he still regarded the Lutheran theology as erroneous in magnifying "faith to such an amazing size that it quite hid all the other commandments."²⁶ Even at that date Wesley was so far from understanding justification by faith that he still regarded faith as among the "commandments." Five months later his view is fully altered: faith is "a gift of God" and the real and only true beginning of the Christian life. Wesley had now arrived at the doctrinal center at which he was always thereafter to remain. It was a position, as he was prepared to admit, coming within a "hair's breadth of Calvinism." This proximity

²³ *Journal*, I, 454. Cf. *Minutes*, I (1744), *Works*, V, 194f.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, 3. See the similarity between this declaration and that of the Moravian, Michael Linner, *Journal*, II, 27, upon Wesley's visit to Herrnhut, August 1738.

²⁵ *Journal*, I, 455-456.

²⁶ *Journal*, I, 419.

to Calvinism is defined in the *Conference Minutes* of 1744 in three points. Obviously, the prime one is grace as the sole ground of faith. But the second is crucial, and with it Wesley puts behind him forever all his earlier religion of self-help. He does so in "denying all natural free-will, and all power antecedent to grace."²⁷

Wesley had found the weak link in the armor of his strenuous and pelagian Christianity and, with the discovery, he found the cure. It was a personal discovery and appropriation. In faith, as the gift of grace, he had found not only release from the burden and "guilt" of sin but also, as he asserts, from the "power" of sin.²⁸ Faith, which he had formerly taken for a "commandment," he now received as a gift; and, in forgiveness of sin, he found release from its "dominion." Sin still remains, but it no longer reigns.²⁹ Thus Wesley found in his own experience, what he was subsequently to see illustrated in the lives of countless others, that the Christian life—life in the image of God—is begun through a work of God in justification—a work he could not refer to man but, by experience, exclusively to the grace of the Holy Spirit. To the "religious man" it was affrontery, for it had left him nothing wherewith to boast.³⁰

(3) It must have seemed almost childish to Wesley as, in retrospect, he looked back, from the vantage-point of 1738 and the succeeding years, upon his earlier hectic striving to conform his life inwardly and outwardly to "the grand Exemplar" when all the time, there had been no provision in his previous version of Christianity for the forgiveness of sins. In those days he had only fastened his eyes upon the goal, girt his loins, multiplied his duties, and cherished self-discipline. Returning to England in January 1738, depressed in spirit, he hitched his belt a little tighter and renewed his former resolutions.³¹ It had not yet occurred to him that sin might be a "power," a barrier to Christian perfection, that would require voiding before the goal could be won. By personal realization he had to learn, what later he was impelled to state, that no fitness for grace is required, but one thing only, a sense "of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every-one who knows he is fit for hell being just fit to come to Christ."³²

²⁷ *Minutes*, I (1744), *Works*, V, 201. Cf. *Sermons*, "Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," ii, 1-7. The denial of "free-will" means the denial of ability to love God completely and man as neighbor. It is denial of the power, apart from justifying grace, to attain Christian perfection. It is denial of freedom for "the righteousness of faith;" there is still freedom *to* evil. *Ibid.*, ii, 7.

²⁸ *Sermons*, "Justification by Faith," iii, 1-5; "Salvation by Faith," ii, 4.

²⁹ Cf. *Sermons*, "Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," iii, 5; "Sin in Believers," iii, 10.

³⁰ Cf. *Journal*, I, 462, John Gambold's letter.

³¹ *Journal*, I, 441f.

³² *Journal*, II, 362. For a larger treatment of this paradox, see my "Salvation for All" in *Methodism*, ed. W. K. Anderson, New York, 1947, 103-116.

Accordingly, and in order to explain what happened before and after Aldersgate, Wesley wrote in his *Journal*: "All the time I was in Savannah I was thus beating the air. Being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ. . . . I sought to establish my own righteousness, and so labored in the fire all my days." Then, referring to the warfare in the members, Wesley continues: "In this vile, abject state of bondage to sin, I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. Before, I had willingly served sin: now it was unwillingly; but still I served it."³³ In retrospect, Wesley now saw the meaning of the radical sinfulness of man apart from justifying grace. He identified it by its disabling power. Later in his great sermon on *The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption*, he graphically described the bondage of sin, its dominion over the life in which grace through faith has not yet wrought its emancipating work.

It was undoubtedly this faith which Wesley found through the instrumentality of Peter Böhler. First he was convicted of the sin of unbelief, viz, unfaith in the working of God. And, secondly, and probably at Aldersgate, Wesley became subject of the grace which works a change in the heart by faith. Speaking of the whole transaction he reflected: "I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new gospel."³⁴ But finally, if justifying faith entails pardon, then, plainly, the new gospel of justification has sin for its presupposition. On this point Wesley is quite emphatic; for it is "sin alone which admits of being forgiven."³⁵

(4) The fourth towering moment in Wesley's pilgrimage is represented in the phrase, "faith working by love." In the *Conference Minutes* of 1746 it is declared: "In asserting salvation by faith, we mean this: (1) That pardon (salvation begun) is received by faith, producing works. (2) That holiness (salvation continued) is faith working by love. (3) That heaven (salvation finished) is the reward of this faith." It is an axiom with Wesley that faith brings forth good works. It is also an axiom that "all truly good works follow after justification."³⁶ The original Methodists, Wesley declared in 1770, set out with the "grand principle" that "there is no power in man, till it is given from above, to do one good work, to speak one good word, or to form one good desire."³⁷ After 1738 it was plain to Wesley that the "heart is necessarily, essentially evil, till the love

³³ *Journal*, I, 470.

³⁴ *Journal*, I, 471.

³⁵ *Sermons*, "Justification by Faith," iii, 1.

³⁶ *Sermons*, "Justification by Faith," iii, 5. Wesley's italics.

³⁷ *Sermons*, "On the Death of George Whitefield," iii, 2.

of God is shed abroad therein. And while the tree is corrupt, so are its fruits."³⁸ This was Wesley's seasoned explanation of the barrenness of his earlier version of Christianity.

Wesley's later Christianity rests upon justification, which is not only forgiveness of sin but a new centering of the whole life in God. He once called it "therapy of the soul." It is the change which the Spirit of God works in the soul "when it raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness." It is the renewal of the "image of God in righteousness and true holiness."³⁹ Says Wesley, "Gospel holiness is no less than the image of God stamped upon the heart; it is no other than the whole mind which was in Christ."⁴⁰

But, in so describing the work of salvation begun and continued, Wesley is actually describing Christian perfection. His conception of its nature has not changed with the passing years, *but his understanding of its basis has completely altered*. Christian perfection is still inward and outward holiness; it is still love of God and love of neighbor, but it is now dependent upon a change wrought in the heart by faith. The change may not be total. The "corruption of nature" still remains, but it no longer has dominion. And now, the righteousness of faith working by love, that is, love of God, completely replaces the righteousness of works. And it is this righteousness of faith of which Wesley, in 1746, expressly declares he knew nothing in his Oxford days.⁴¹ Now at last the yoke is easy and the burden light. Now the good tree brings forth good fruits, for faith works by love. Faith is no more among the "commandments" but is the spring and motive of their fulfillment.

III. OBSERVATIONS IN RETROSPECT

The four living stones, foundational for the structure of early Methodism, have been scanned. They are: Christian perfection as the goal of human life, justification by faith as the way to it, radical sinfulness as the barrier to be overcome, and faith that works by love as the normal fruit of the renovated life. What we have seen is that, always clear as he was about the nature of the Christian life, Wesley, until 1738, did not understand the way of attainment. In 1733 he was requiring "circumcision of the heart" and unqualified love to God and man. But he did not realize that these are the fruits of faith, that faith itself is a gift of grace, and that

³⁸ *Sermons*, "Justification by Faith," iii, 5.

³⁹ *Sermons*, "The New Birth," ii, 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, 1.

⁴¹ *Minutes* (1746), *Works*, VI, 205.

the gifting carries with it a divine renewal of the image of God in man, a new creature.

In plain language, prior to 1738, Wesley's religion was fundamentally pelagian. He was unaware of his own incompetence to conform to the rule of the Christian life he so rigorously imposed. He came to see that his program required more than human resources, that there is a bondage of the will until it is changed, and that, although a man may "strive with all his might, he cannot conquer: sin is mightier than he."⁴² Those who think that Wesley overdoes the case will have the right to dissent in the measure that, having defined the standard of Christian life as properly as he, have also striven as disciplinedly and with comparable exertion to attain it. Wesley at first underestimated the task by overestimating his powers. When bondage to sin became an acknowledged reality, he was ripe for salvation by faith through God's grace.

The eighteenth century revival was, on a vast scale, a recapitulation in human experience of salvation by faith, which Wesley himself had come to know. As the revivalists held a mirror up to man's need and offered to *all* God's pardoning grace, grace was appropriated in renewal of life. The presupposition was as simple as it was potent: God's forgiveness was at hand but for the taking. God became God of the living, not of the dead. God acted, and men received a jolt; but it was a jolt out of the old ways into the way of righteousness. It was frequently not gradual, but sudden. This at first startled Wesley, and he disbelieved.⁴³ There were reasons: hitherto, his Christian life had been something he had been at pains to contrive, and his progress had been both laborious and disheartening. But now the result was taken out of man's hands, and Wesley had to learn that what he had supposed could only be achieved was in fact a gift to be received.

This, if we are candid, was the beginning of Methodism; and now it is perhaps not out of order to ask how Methodism today fares by comparison. Statistically speaking, on every measurable count, modern Methodism dwarfs the little sectarian societies of the eighteenth century. On one point only modern Methodism suffers by comparison, and here I speak frankly but I think fairly: the early societies counted on the grace of God, whereas we mainly count on our momentum. There are some misgivings among us. The question has been asked of late, what is it that we stand for; what is our Christian witness? Is what we stand for "simply and plainly

⁴² *Sermons*, "Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," ii, 7.

⁴³ *Journal*, I, 454.

liberty of opinion, efficiency of organization, variety of worship, and the invariably warmed heart?"⁴⁴

I think the permissible, the really fundamental answer is this: Modern Methodism has reverted to and settled for the religion of John Wesley prior to 1738. Its conception of Christianity is the noble ideal of "uniform following of Christ" and conformity to the Master as "our grand Exemplar." Perhaps modern Methodists are less zealous in emulation of Christ than was Wesley between 1725 and 1738, but they have everything else in common with him. Where is there any serious reckoning with the impediment of sin or a conspicuous proclamation of the need of forgiveness? Are we not blandly unsuspecting that justification is a work of God, a needed work, and that faith is a gift? Is not our Christianity self-contrived, and have we any clear conviction that a "renewal of the heart" is preliminary to the righteousness of faith?

The prevailing tenor of our exhortation shares much with Wesley's unreformed conviction that Christian life is a work of man. Like him, before 1738, we stand for the perfection of man through the imitation of Christ. My guess is that, like Wesley, we must come to know Christ as reconciler and redeemer before we can follow him as Lord. My further guess is that "the god of this world" will have finally triumphed over the revival which gave Methodism its birth unless, in the words of Coke and Moore, there is a divine reassembly of the scattered but "still living stones of the once beautiful building."

⁴⁴Hildebrandt, F., "The Rediscovery of Wesley," *Drew Gateway*, XXV, 4 (1955), 184.

Christianity as Life

Christianity is neither dogma nor theology; it is neither creed nor liturgy. It is life: life abundant. But Christianity has the dogmas, liturgies, and beliefs of its historic community. This community, inspired by Christ, keeps on living through all the moments of history, whether these be moments of crisis or moments of plenitude. For each and all of these moments Christ has his message of life.¹

¹ Domingo Marrero (Puerto Rico) in *Ortega o el Centauro*.

Horace Bushnell's Concept of Response

A Fresh Approach to the Doctrine of Ability and Inability

E. CLINTON GARDNER

I

FROM THE TIME of Jonathan Edwards to that of Horace Bushnell, New England theology was greatly agitated by what now seems a quaint relic from the theological past. In one respect the passing of the doctrine of natural ability and moral inability was like the passing of the dinosaurs: each died because it proved inadaptable to its new environment. Yet the issue with which this doctrine dealt was a living one; for the basic question which it raised was the one at stake in the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine, between Arminius and Calvin, between the New England "Arminians" of the eighteenth century and Jonathan Edwards, and between the Unitarians and Calvinists in the nineteenth century; it is also the issue in the modern debate between those Protestants who hold that man is basically good and those who hold that he has become so corrupt that he has lost the divine image with which he was originally endowed.

The doctrine of natural ability and moral inability had been introduced into New England theology by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) in his efforts to meet a subtle and pervasive form of Arminianism which threatened to undermine the traditional Calvinist doctrines of man and salvation. As he analyzed the differences between the Calvinists and the Arminians, the main point at issue concerned the nature of the will and especially the question of the freedom of the will.¹ While he was willing to be called a Calvinist "for distinction's sake," he was a bold and independent thinker, and in his *Freedom of Will* he countered the "prevailing notions of that freedom of will, which is supposed to be essential" for moral responsibility with a forceful reformulation of the Calvinist doctrine of

¹ *Freedom of Will*, 1804, pp. vii f. For a perceptive analysis of this "Arminianism" and its roots in the thought of such English Nonconformists as Daniel Whitby and John Taylor of Norwich, see Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards*, 1949, pp. 101 ff.

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man's complete dependence upon God, and he clearly defined the nature of responsibility within this context. Presupposing that there is no such thing as a causeless event, he traced from point to point the development of an act of choice in such a way as to show that at no point in this process is it possible for the freedom of the will to enter. But the fact that man's will is inexorably determined by antecedent steps does not relieve man of responsibility, for the final choice is still man's own act, Edwards declared.² Taking his clue from the empirical psychology of John Locke, he drew a careful distinction between "natural" and "moral" ability and inability, and upon the basis of man's natural, or physical, ability to choose the good he held that the responsibility that rests upon man is complete.

Throughout the remainder of the eighteenth century the traditional Calvinism was challenged by a series of movements including the relatively mild liberalism of such forerunners of Unitarianism as Jonathan Mayhew and Charles Chauncy, the Universalism of John Murray and Elhanan Winchester, and the inroads of the more radical English and French Deism of such writers as Voltaire and Thomas Paine. The issues raised by these movements varied in certain important respects, but two of the crucial points of debate between the defenders of Orthodoxy and all of their opponents concerned the traditional doctrines of total depravity and irresistible grace. The Strict Calvinistic successors of Edwards sought to defend these doctrines by appealing to the distinction which he had made between moral and natural ability and inability. The Old Calvinists, on the other hand, tried hard to adjust the traditional creedal formulae to the changing times, but the old terms had lost much of their force and contemporary relevance. By the end of the eighteenth century the whole discussion of the question of human ability and inability had become quite sterile. The need for new categories and thought forms was urgent if the theology of the day was to remain pertinent to the changing currents of thought in science, psychology, epistemology, and political life.

This need was especially urgent at the turn of the century in view of the fact that Christianity itself—not traditional Calvinism alone—was being challenged by a powerful and popular new form of humanism which proclaimed the freedom and essential goodness of natural man. Drawing much of its strength from Rousseau, the new romantic humanitarianism represented a reaction both against revealed religion and against the rationalism of eighteenth-century Deism.³ Reason, it declared, must

² *Ibid.*, pp. 230 ff., 275 ff.

³ Hallowell, John H., *Main Currents in Modern Political Thought*, Henry Holt & Company, 1950, pp. 129 ff.

be supplemented by an appeal to the sentiments of the heart.⁴ This new movement was man-centered. Unlike the earlier Deism, it was warm-hearted and democratic, and it was nourished by the progress that was being made in science and by the optimism and democratic spirit fostered by the American Revolution and the frontier.⁵ It called the authority of all traditional creeds into question. To meet this attack, it was necessary to show that the religious beliefs rested upon the experience which they interpreted rather than upon authority alone.

In New England the man who, more than any other, succeeded in distinguishing the central issues in the continuing debate concerning human ability from the peripheral ones and enabled his contemporaries to see them in a fresh context was Horace Bushnell (1802-1876), pastor of the North Church in Hartford, Connecticut, 1833-1859. Bushnell was reared in a devout home, attended Yale College, served on the editorial staff of the *New York Journal of Commerce*, studied law at Yale, and in 1831 entered the Yale Divinity School. Here he came in contact with Nathaniel W. Taylor, the ablest leader of the broadest school of the Calvinism of the day. Bushnell admired the independent quality of Taylor's mind but differed sharply with his methods and conclusions. He found welcome relief from Taylor's philosophical approach to theology in Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, a work to which he later confessed he owed more than to any other book except the Bible.⁶ An examination of his reinterpretation of the traditional doctrine of ability and inability reveals the extent to which he stands in the main stream of orthodox Protestantism and the extent to which he has been misunderstood by those who have interpreted his thought largely in terms of Channing's conception of the essential goodness of man.⁷

In a sense William Hart, writing on the eve of the American Revolution, had anticipated Horace Bushnell's reformulation of the doctrine of regeneration. As an Old Calvinist he had insisted, for example, that the Strict Calvinists had erred in their doctrine of total depravity by making it a physical rather than a moral corruption.⁸ Thus they had been led to

⁴ Rousseau, J. J., *Emile*, Everyman's Library, 1948, pp. 249 ff.

⁵ Curti, Merle, *The Growth of American Thought*, Harper & Brothers, 1943, pp. 165 ff., 355; Gabriel, Ralph H., *The Course of American Democratic Thought*, Ronald Press, 1940, pp. 4, 40 ff., 86; Becker, Carl, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*, Yale University Press, 1932, p. 130.

⁶ Dinsmore, Charles A., "Horace Bushnell," in *A Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. III, pp. 350 ff.

⁷ See, e.g., Munger, Theodore, *Horace Bushnell: Preacher and Theologian*, 1899, and Gladden, Washington, *Present Day Theology*, 1913.

⁸ "A Letter to the Reverend Nathaniel Whitaker," 1771, pp. 3, 29 f.

make regeneration consist of a purely physical change. They had also erred, Hart believed, in ascribing this change to the agency of the Spirit alone. The soul, even in its corruption, retains its capacity of "feeling the impression of God upon it, of being attracted by him, and answering this felt attraction, by an attraction to him."⁹ God does not over-ride man's will while man sits passively by; rather, He confronts man with the force of moral truth, to which those in whom the divine grace becomes effective respond and by which they are empowered. But if William Hart had challenged the Strict Calvinists' understanding of regeneration, he had been unable to free himself from the old theological framework and develop his insights to nearly so large a degree as Bushnell. Hart needed a new conception of human nature, particularly a more adequate understanding of the social nexus of the self before he could break away from the highly individualistic conception of salvation represented by the Calvinist doctrine of decrees.

Nathaniel W. Taylor (1786-1858), one of the leaders of the New Haven School, and William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), the Unitarian, likewise anticipated the work of Bushnell in certain important respects. In the interest of vindicating the goodness of God by assigning to man a fuller measure of responsibility than the traditional doctrine seemed to them to allow, both had insisted that man has not only the physical but also the moral ability to choose the good. Taylor, however, was by no means willing to go as far as Channing in the direction of human goodness. He had only made a strategic retreat in order to make Calvinism more defensible. Although man is both physically and morally able to choose the good, he is still depraved, Taylor declared, in the sense that it is certain prior to any particular moral choice that, apart from the influence of supernatural grace, man will always choose evil.¹⁰ Channing, on the other hand, believed that man is essentially good and is both able and willing to choose the good. It seemed to him that Taylor was merely splitting theological hairs in his debate with Bennet Tyler (1783-1858). And so far as the latter's attempt to establish man's responsibility and guilt by distinguishing between "natural" and "moral inability" was concerned, this seemed to him to be making a "distinction without a difference."¹¹ Any "inability to do our duty, which is born with us"—call it moral or whatever one will—is sufficient, he declared, to absolve man from guilt.¹²

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁰ *Revealed Theology*, 1859, pp. 206, 302; *Concio ad Clerum*, 1828, pp. 14 ff.

¹¹ *Works*, 1896, p. 460.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 341, 460.

Discussion of the nature and extent of human ability involved consideration of the closely related doctrine of regeneration. Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), also an Old Calvinist, and Tyler, both seeking to uphold the sovereignty of God, had insisted that regeneration by the Holy Spirit was necessary in order to give the sinner a new heart which might perceive and desire the good. Such a change, they believed, was instantaneous: "Man is either a saint or a sinner, a believer or an unbeliever."¹³ They had also come dangerously near substituting a new agent for the old in the process. Taylor, like Channing, insisted that the identity of the individual agent must be preserved throughout his entire moral and spiritual experience: man is the actor.¹⁴ As Channing put it, God does not carry man "forward as a weight" but quickens him and strengthens him to walk himself.¹⁵ Unlike Channing, however, Taylor held that man is completely dependent upon God for a new heart; yet in a very real sense the answer to the question whether or not he will have a new heart rests with the sinner. If a sinner sleeps in sin, it is certain that God will not give him a new heart; if he awakens to duty, God may.¹⁶ Taylor had begun to think of regeneration in terms of a dual agency, and, like Dwight, he spoke of grace as "unresisted" rather than as "irresistible."¹⁷ "Converting grace," he declared, "is grace that *draws*, not compels; that *attracts*, not forces." Yet Taylor was still working within the traditional framework of ideas, and on these terms he was unable to explain how a sinner can strive toward regeneration while his "governing purpose" is "wholly and positively sinful."¹⁸

An equally troublesome issue in the debate concerning decrees had to do with the doctrine of reprobation. Tyler, the Old Calvinist, was firm. God wills and decrees that some men should remain sinners. Deny this, he declared, and the doctrines of election and regeneration must be given up.¹⁹ Taylor demurred. He made a distinction between the will of God and the decrees of God. Like Channing, he believed that the goodness of God must be maintained at all costs. It is the divine will that all men should be holy and happy, he declared, but God has decreed sin because He "cannot prevent all sin forever without destroying moral agency."²⁰ Similarly, God

¹³ Tyler, *Lectures on Theology*, 1859, p. 237. Cf. Dwight, *Theology, Explained and Defended*, 1821, Vol. I, Sermon LXXIV.

¹⁴ *Practical Sermons*, 1858, pp. 298 ff., 401.

¹⁵ *Works*, p. 251.

¹⁶ *Revealed Theology*, p. 405.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 419 f.; cf. Dwight, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Sermon LXXII.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁹ "Dr. Tyler's Examination of Dr. Taylor's Theological Views," in *The Spirit of the Pilgrims*, V, 1832, pp. 327 ff.

²⁰ *Lectures on the Moral Government of God*, 1859, Vol. II, p. 366; cf. "Dr. Taylor's Reply to Dr. Tyler's Examination" in *The Spirit of the Pilgrims*, V, 1832, p. 437.

has withheld converting grace from some sinners in the interest of the moral system as a whole.²¹

Taylor had tried hard to liberalize Calvinism, But Channing and the Unitarians thought his "improvements" were largely verbal, for he still fought under the banners of Orthodoxy. The old terms were all there—patched up a bit, to be sure, but they were the same old wine skins, and they were unsuited for new wine. The Strict Calvinists were also dissatisfied, for they saw that Taylor had really undermined the traditional doctrines which he sought to defend. Joel Hawes, for example, was sufficiently alarmed to request Taylor to "relieve the minds of many" who were suspicious of his orthodoxy. Taylor was surprised, but in his reply he noted that the differences between himself and his Calvinist opponents were largely "philosophical" and of "minor" importance.²² Tyler, however, thought the differences were major. Evidently an impasse had been reached.

II

So long as the controversy centered on the validity of certain traditional creedal forms, there was little possibility of a resolution of the differences between the participants in the discussion. The whole debate needed to be placed in a fresh context, and the issues needed to be approached from the standpoint of existential and confessional theologizing. Horace Bushnell was particularly well suited for this task, for he had witnessed the largely futile effort of Calvinism to adapt itself to the growing spirit and needs of the nineteenth century. He was in many ways a child of the reaction against Calvinism during his early years; yet his own personal religious experience was profound. It was, moreover, more in keeping with the new understanding of human development as involving a gradual process of growth than with the older psychology underlying the radical conversion experience of traditional Calvinism.

Like the romanticists, he was suspicious of an orthodoxy which could not be supported by the direct appeal to religious experience as the immediate awareness of the soul's relationship to God. Language, he declared, is representative rather than exact, and the insights to which it points can be adequately known only insofar as they are experienced or intuited.²³ In the area of religion, he believed, abstract theologizing must be supplemented by an analysis of religious experience itself, for no particular

²¹ *Revealed Theology*, p. 388.

²² "Letter from Reverend Dr. Taylor to Reverend Dr. Hawes," in *The Spirit of the Pilgrims*, V, 1832, pp. 173 ff.

²³ *God in Christ*, 1877, pp. 92 ff.

formulation of the truth is literally true. Yet his experience had convinced him that the traditional doctrine of the church contained a central core of truth which needed to be recaptured and reinterpreted in such a way as to meet the objections raised against it by the romantic humanitarians in particular and also by the Unitarians, who likewise in large measure championed the goodness and freedom of man without giving adequate attention to his sinfulness and dependence.

Bushnell challenged the major assumptions upon which the debate had been conducted by his predecessors, both Calvinist and Unitarian. In the first place, he rejected their substantialist conception of human nature as something with which man is endowed at birth. Both the Calvinists and the Unitarians had tended to think of human ability, whether present in man or lost as the result of his fall, as an "inherent, independent" power to obey God.²⁴ Bushnell, on the other hand, believed that human ability must be viewed as a function of the total context in which moral action takes place. Seen in this light, man has "at every moment a complete power" to do what God requires at any particular moment, for he has the volitional freedom to respond to and co-operate with the workings of the Spirit.²⁵

In the second place, Bushnell rejected, for much the same reasons, the highly individualistic conception of the earlier thinkers that man is an independent moral agent. He assumed instead that man is made to act responsively in community with God and his fellow men. Since man never acts in complete isolation from this community and from a particular situation, the moral quality of his activity will be determined in large measure by the character of these communal relationships and his ability will vary with the demands and potentialities of the situation in which he is required to act.

In the third place, Bushnell approached the whole question of human ability, not from the standpoint of seeking to determine how much of human conduct is blameworthy in the sense of deserving divine judgment but, rather, from the standpoint of redemption, seeking to analyze the moral and religious nature of man's life in society in order that man might be redeemed by grace which works in and through the community. God's justice, he believed, was amply evidenced by his grace, and since his primary concern was to proclaim the saving power of the divine grace for all, he did not deem it necessary to defend the divine justice in damning those

²⁴ *Nature and the Supernatural*, 1877, p. 238.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

sinner whom God had not elected to salvation; neither did he think it necessary to defend the justice of God as the romanticists and Unitarians had done, primarily by attacking these Calvinist doctrines rather than by demonstrating the goodness of God in the provisions which he had made for the salvation of a sinful humanity. In the light of these new assumptions he undertook to reinterpret the basic Christian affirmations to which the Calvinist doctrine of ability and inability pointed.

(1) *Dependence is the condition of holiness.* The entire question of natural ability as opposed to moral inability was largely an artificial one, he declared: "For there is really no such thing, and never was, as an ability to holiness, or moral perfection, that is inherent."²⁶ Man has neither a natural nor a moral ability to do good that is inherent, either before or after regeneration. Both the orthodox clergy and the Unitarians had been too individualistic in their efforts to defend the perfections of God. "Dependence," he declared roundly, "is the condition of all true holiness, even in sinless minds, if such there be."²⁷ The Unitarians and Taylor were right in insisting that "God requires no man to do, without ability to do," but they, as well as the Strict Calvinists, had failed to see that frequently power is given to man as the exigencies of life arise.²⁸

In their analysis of regeneration the traditional Calvinists, Bushnell believed, had frequently construed it as an organic change in the subject, a change which amounted not to the regeneration of the old man but rather to the generation of another person.²⁹ Like the traditionalists he recognized, however, that this transformation was radical in nature and involved a change in the *status* of the subject from an evil to a holy condition; but unlike them he insisted that it was essentially a moral rather than a material transformation, and as such could be best understood, in words that are reminiscent of Augustine, as a change from "a false love, a wrong love, a downward, selfish love" to a "right love, a heavenly love, a divine love."³⁰

But if the traditional doctrine of regeneration was misleading in the foregoing respect, the position taken by the Unitarians contained an equally dangerous tendency, viz., to make religion simply a matter of morality. Bushnell drew a much clearer distinction than Channing had done between the moral and the spiritual natures of man. For him, the

²⁶ *Sermons for the New Life*, 1858, p. 372.

²⁷ *Loc. cit.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 116.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 118; cf. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XIV, Sections 7, 28.

former is concerned with man's sense of duty and the power of choice which forms the basis of responsibility; the latter involves man's personal relationship with God. Regeneration is concerned with the restoration of that community of being which man had originally with God but which was lost in the fall. Of himself man can never recover this lost community in which he lived by constant inspiration of God, but fallen man still has the capacity for inspiration. Man can steer himself, so to speak, into the range of God's operations: "Self-impelling, self-renovating power we have none; but the helm-power we have, and if we use it rightly, it will put us in the range of all power, even the mighty power of God."³¹

This, of course, can be done only by faith which again can only be understood dialectically as, in one sense, something that is wrought by God and, in another sense, something that is acted by man. Thus, the person who is regenerated is shown to retain his identity throughout the change, and speculation concerning the old question of "before and after"—whether human striving or the work of the Spirit must be first—is replaced by the concept of human dependence with its dual affirmation of a limited freedom and a limited power on the part of man, on the one hand, and the primary importance of the divine being and action, on the other. The significance of the latter will become clearer when we consider Bushnell's recovery of the concept of "response."

Bushnell applied his understanding of regeneration to the growth and development of children in *Christian Nurture*. In this treatise it becomes clear how far he had gone beyond his predecessors who had tended to think of human nature as a substance with which a person is endowed at birth. Bushnell's conception is more existential and social; the self becomes completed only as it acts and enters into relationship with other selves. It is not fully "born" at the moment of physical birth, but it grows as a person's latent capacities and powers are employed.³² Unlike many of his successors, however, Bushnell made regeneration an essential element in the process of Christian nurture. His primary aim was to describe the way in which supernatural grace operates; for he considered the old doctrine that a child cannot do anything acceptable to God until *after* it is regenerated "one of the most hurtful delusions, short of real infidelity, that can be put in language."³³

(2) *Man is created for community.* Not only is man unable to seek

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 167 f. See also *Nature and the Supernatural*, pp. 234-249.

³² *Christian Nurture*, Yale University Press reprint, 1947, p. 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 322.

and perform the good apart from God, Bushnell believed, but the self is unable either to be born or to live in a state of isolation from other selves. Each soul is inherently related to God in an unbroken community of being when it comes into existence, but it loses this state of "original righteousness," Bushnell declares in terms that anticipate Reinhold Niebuhr,³⁴ when it attempts to live without God and apart from him.³⁵ Man can never regain his lost state of holiness by his own efforts. What he had originally as a gift he can never reproduce by his personal will; it can be regained only by the "righteousness of God revealed to faith."³⁶

And yet so deeply rooted is man's need for fellowship with God, Bushnell believed, that he can never completely escape or ignore it. Despite the perverse effects of depravity, every man has a religious nature which causes him to seek God. Like Augustine, Bushnell believed that the soul still retains the divine imprint upon it.³⁷ This insight, together with his appreciation of the varying psychological moods of man, provided Bushnell with a much firmer grounding for his assertion of the free agency of man in the process of regeneration than Dwight, Tyler, and Taylor had when they held that man never naturally seeks God and therefore needs to have his heart changed before he can seek the good.

Viewing regeneration in the foregoing light, Bushnell had little difficulty in showing how the personal identity of the sinner who becomes the subject of this change is preserved in fact as well as in name. Like an artist in a moment of inspiration, he declared, the sinner who is restored to community with God is lifted up into another level of existence. In the new state the disciple has the same conscience, remembers the same sins, and is the very same person he was before, but the restored consciousness of God has made him so nearly another being that he is no longer tormented by his old sin.³⁸ Thus what appears to be "a kind of metaphysical impossibility" in making a "good conscience" out of an "evil or accusing conscience" is easily accomplished.

The restoration of the soul to its lost community with God, it should be noted, is a process rather than a single, separate event. The single, dramatic change upon which Dwight, Tyler, and Taylor placed so much emphasis seemed to Bushnell to be relatively unimportant in itself. The first "putting on of Christ" is of little consequence, he declared, unless

³⁴ *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943, Vol. I, Ch. X.

³⁵ *Sermons for the New Life*, p. 76.

³⁶ *Christ and His Salvation*, 1871, p. 419.

³⁷ *Sermons on Living Subjects*, 1883, p. 134; cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VII, Ch. 12.

³⁸ *Christ and His Salvation*, p. 303.

one continues to put him on until one is "Christed" through and through and even the desires are regenerated. Vestiges of sin persist in the lives of the saints long after they have ceased to commit conscious sin.³⁹ To the extent, however, that the soul is restored to its normal condition of community and dependence, to that extent is it invested with the righteousness of God. But it is not made righteous in the sense of being set in a state of self-centered righteousness which can be maintained by an ability that is complete within the person; rather, the soul is made righteous by keeping its relationship with God continuously renewed, just as the day is made luminous not by the light of the sunrise staying in it but by a constant reception of light from the sun.⁴⁰ Thus, Bushnell declared, in language that is strongly reminiscent of Paul,⁴¹ the sinner who is justified is not considered just in himself but rather derivatively from God by faith which keeps him in such a relation to God that he is continuously transformed and renewed by him.

(3) *The religious life is a life of response to God.* The manner in which human dependence and human freedom are both provided for in Bushnell's thought is best illustrated by reference to his understanding of faith. Man is completely dependent upon God for his true blessedness, but man must respond to the divine grace with faith. This is a free act of complete trust on the part of man. In one sense it is a final act of commitment to God, but in another sense it is a continuous act, for man must continually renew his commitment of himself to God. Faith is thus viewed as a kind of dialectical movement which enables the life and righteousness of God to continue to dwell in man.

Bushnell's substitution of the concept of response for the terminology of "natural ability and moral inability" in dealing with the whole question of self-salvation *versus* salvation by grace did a great deal to clarify the complementary nature of the human and divine roles in the effecting of salvation while at the same time emphasizing the primary importance of the divine role. Man is dependent; salvation is by faith; man responds to the saving activity of God. Hence, the primacy of grace.

Unlike the Unitarians, Bushnell believed that man is in a state of impotent disorder and that the salvation which he needs is basically religious, rather than moral. Christ has undertaken to effect such a salvation by

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

⁴⁰ *Forgiveness and Law*, 1874, pp. 214-217.

⁴¹ Rom. 3:21 ff.; Gal. 5:5.

being himself incarnated into man's "corporate evil," or kingdom of evil,⁴² and meeting man at the very point of his fall, thereby bringing the moral power of God into personal relationship with man. Christ does not, however, work man's salvation by any "fiat of absolute will"; he respects man's moral nature too much to do it violence. Rather, by "moving" on man's wants and deepest desires, the "World's Regenerator" wins his way into the heart of man and renovates and raises all believers into the divine life.⁴³ This is salvation. In this condition lost man finds both God and his true self. The change of status is wrought by God in Christ, but it can be effected only if man draws nigh responsively to God: "For as God comes nigh to us in his son, he can be a salvation, only as we come nigh responsively to Him, yielding our feeling to the cogent working of his."⁴⁴ This human response to the divine grace can be made only in faith, by trusting oneself over to God both in what man is and in what man undertakes to do and become.

Christ is represented as standing ever before the door of the human heart and knocking for admission, promising that, if any man open the door, he will come in and sup with him. No one is excluded from the seeking and the promise.⁴⁵ For Bushnell it is enough to know that if man's faith is conditioned by the Spirit, so is the victory of the Spirit conditioned by man's faith. It is sufficient to know that, if faith is to be God's work, it is also to be man's act, and it cannot be worked before it is acted.⁴⁶

Bushnell's primary contribution to the theological discussion of his day consisted in pointing it in a new direction in its search for a reconciliation of traditional Protestantism and the growing demand for a more adequate recognition both of man's freedom and of his potentialities for good. Despite the fact that (partly through weaknesses in his restatement of the great Christian beliefs) he was largely misunderstood by his contemporaries and successors, Bushnell's reformulation of the Protestant teaching concerning the nature of man and the manner in which salvation is effected offers a rich source of insights for a modern reformulation of these doctrines.

In the first place, his use of the concept of response represents a strongly biblical understanding of faith with provision both for the primary character of grace and for man's act of entrusting himself to Him who is

⁴² *God in Christ*, pp. 208 ff. Cf. Rauschenbusch, Walter, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 1917, Ch. IX; and Ritschl, Albrecht, *The Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, 1902, pp. 334 ff.

⁴³ *Christ and His Salvation*, pp. 87 ff.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

⁴⁵ *Sermons for the New Life*, p. 126.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

the source of this outreaching grace. The category of response is, of course, widely used in contemporary theology, but its use in Bushnell presents a striking example of the way in which it can serve as the basis of a warm, evangelical Protestantism.

In the second place, Bushnell's understanding of the organic character of the home and church constituted a much-needed corrective to the highly individualistic and substantialistic conceptions of human nature held both by the traditional Calvinists and by the Unitarians. This insight enabled him to appreciate the potentiality of social relationships for good or for evil while at the same time he warned against all forms of self-salvation for man.⁴⁷

Thirdly, in his view of the Atonement Bushnell succeeded in breaking away from the traditional terminology which described the work of Christ in terms of a legalistic transaction. While his successors frequently tended to speak of Christ as the "Great Example," Bushnell maintained a strong emphasis upon the "cost" of forgiveness.⁴⁸ However, for him this "cost" was not understood as a courtroom transaction with the emphasis upon justice but rather as the vicarious self-giving of Christ in order to win a way into the heart of fallen man and restore him to community with God by the quickening power of divine love.

Finally, Bushnell's reformulation of the Protestant doctrines of man and sin provides a much-needed corrective for the frequently one-sided emphasis of neo-orthodoxy upon the more somber aspects of human nature and for its tendency generally to neglect the grounds of Christian hope, particularly the provision for grace and forgiveness and renewal.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Cf. Smith, H. Shelton, *Changing Conceptions of Original Sin*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955, p. 163.

⁴⁸ *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, 1866, p. 73; *Forgiveness and Law*, pp. 40 ff.

⁴⁹ Compare, for example, Daniel Day Williams' criticism of neo-orthodoxy in his *God's Grace and Man's Hope*, Harper & Brothers, 1949.

Revelation, Relevance and Relationships

RANDOLPH CRUMP MILLER

WE HAVE INHERITED our Christian faith. This heritage is found primarily in the Bible and is communicated in, through, and by the Church. We call the gospel *saving truth*: not scientific truth or historical truth, but saving truth, because the gospel has the power to make new creatures of us.

We call the Bible *the drama of redemption* because it is a record of the mighty acts of God in history, bringing to us the good news that our sinfulness may be overcome through faith in Jesus Christ. We call the Church *the fellowship of the Holy Spirit* because we find in the Church the means of grace to heal our broken relationships with man and God.

So we begin with something that is given to us. This is not something that we invented. It comes down to us through the story the Bible tells, through the heritage of the Church, and through law and tradition. It is maintained in the Church of which we are members and is communicated by the Church to the world.

When we teach, we are sharing in a fellowship of the Holy Spirit, in which we find it possible to trust each other and to join together in mutual faith in Almighty God. Christian education means to capture the total personality of a child or an adult so that this learner comes to know and respond to God in worship and in personal relationships. We are concerned, then, with the *revelation* of God as it is *relevant* to the learner in his *relationships*.

REVELATION

We use the word "revelation" every day. We see someone whom we think to be a paragon of virtue. Then he stubs his toe and loses his temper and reveals his true nature. Parents are particularly susceptible to what we might call "betrayal by revelation." They set themselves up as ideal parents and tell their children not to do something; and the youngsters say, "Yeah? But *you* do it." Parents reveal their true nature to their children by what they do and are more than by what they say.

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Revelation in the Christian sense is always something that gets done. William Temple says that it consists "in a coincidence of divinely guided events with minds divinely illuminated to apprehend those events," so that there are no "revealed truths," but there are "truths of revelation." "All doctrines are inferences drawn from that revelation in the context provided by the rest of experience."¹ In other words revelation is always something that happens and something that is apprehended; it is event plus meaning.

There are all kinds of events recorded in the Bible, some of which have more meaning than others. Take, for example, some of the experiences of the prophets. Amos takes a walk from Tekoa to Bethel or Samaria, and he sees all kinds of things happening: high living, ivory palaces, fancy music—which to the people are perhaps a form of culture. But Amos, with his capacity to see the meaning of events, pronounces God's woe upon such living, for it is a denial of God's demand for social justice.

The death of Christ illustrates this. I imagine if there had been a newspaper published in Jerusalem in the year Jesus died, it might have read: "On Friday last, a deluded prophet who thought he was the king of the Jews was put to death by order of Pontius Pilate, and no time has been announced for the funeral service. Informed sources say he was buried immediately in a grave provided by Joseph of Arimathea." This is a pretty good description of the event. The event had occurred, and this is what the citizens of Jerusalem thought of it. It did not reveal anything to them, or even to the disciples. Good Friday did not take on its meaning as revelation until to the event of Good Friday was added the event of Easter. It had meaning first to Peter; and then to the twelve; and later on to the five hundred; to the brother of the Lord, James; and finally, as Paul says, "to one born out of due time," to Paul.

Revelation is event plus appreciation. God acts, but men have to have the power to receive. If you apply this to the Bible, you run into some very strange and helpful things both for your own faith and for the ways in which it can be communicated.

One of the ways of looking at the Bible is to see it as a story or drama enacted in history. It is a record of the mighty acts of God as he has revealed himself in these events. Biblical theology is interpreted as seeing the crucial acts of the drama as creation, covenant, Christ, Church, and consummation.²

¹ *Nature, Man and God*, London: Macmillan & Co., 1934, pp. 315, 499, 500.

² See my *Biblical Theology and Christian Education*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956, for a full treatment of this theme.

CREATION

Act I of this drama of events in history whereby God reveals himself is God's act in creating the universe. God is the source of all that is. And what is man's immediate response? Man, who is created in God's image and has the capacity to be in perfect relationship with God, does the one thing he should not do. Of course, Adam blames it on Eve and Eve blames it on the serpent, and both are partly right; but they have broken their relationship with God and are cast out of the Garden to keep them away from the tree of life. In this creation story there is a revelation of the nature of God and of the nature of man.

The same revelation is found in the Cain and Abel story, and Cain is sent into the land of Nod, of the wanderers. It is repeated in the story of the flood, in which God's judgment is passed on mankind and Noah and his family are given a chance to be the redemptive remnant. This is not very hopeful either, because Noah takes the first opportunity to get drunk. The same theme is repeated in the story of the tower of Babel. This time, men want to build a tower and become as Gods. So God knocks down their tower and makes a "babble" of their language. Now men are separated from God and cannot communicate with each other.

This is the first act of the drama of God's acts in relation to man: God's seeking to redeem man and man's response in terms of his egotism.

COVENANT

The second act of this drama is the story of the covenant, beginning with Abraham, centering primarily in Moses, and running throughout the Old Testament story.

The covenant with Moses is the promise that Yahweh will be their God and they will be his people. This covenant is written on stone. To keep this agreement, this contract, this testament, the people are to obey the Law. The people respond to this with great joy because, by a prophet, Yahweh has brought his people out of Egypt. He has delivered them from slavery and led them to the promised land.

But the people do not keep the Law. They are just like Adam and Eve and Cain and all the rest, and they break the Law, or they work out ceremonial laws to obey in order to act as if they are good when they are not. The prophets condemn this attitude time and again: Woe unto you who hope for the Day of the Lord; it is darkness and not light.

Yet there is hope. The love of God for his people is like the love of a husband for his wife. Israel has played the harlot. The people of Israel

have gone a-whoring, but God loves them so much that he is willing to buy them back when they have prostituted their faith. The story of Hosea is the great love story of the Old Testament, not only because it reveals Hosea's love for a wife whom he buys back from slavery and prostitution, but it is also a symbol of the kind of love Yahweh has for his people.

The whole of the Old Testament is the story of the ways that the Lord has acted to redeem his people. But the prophets begin to see that no man can earn his redemption. Redemption means that someone else pays the price. The prophets are saying that we need a Messiah to save the people from their sins, and if they look at history without the hope of a Messiah they agree with the preacher in Ecclesiastes that "all is futility."

Unless the Lord sends a Messiah, unless God himself is willing to take upon himself our suffering and sin, it is still hopeless. So the second act of the drama ends with the hope of a Redeemer but with no sign of one.

CHRIST

The third act of the drama of redemption is the coming of Christ. Here is the Messiah, so long sought for, so long looked for. "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself." We have a new covenant, a new agreement, a new testament. The new covenant admits that man cannot earn his salvation. There is no way to break down the barriers between God and man. It is summarized in the letter to the Ephesians: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (2:8-9, R.S.V.).

People are so perverse that even if they were so good that they could earn their salvation, they would know it and therefore become guilty of the sin of pride. They would be worse off than the sinner who knew he was a sinner and was not saved.

This is the story that is so hard to get over to the pillars of the Church today. They somehow think they have earned their salvation. It was exactly the same trouble that Jesus had with the Pharisees, the most respectable and righteous people you could ask for. They were caught up in a moralism that made redemption unnecessary.

The New Testament tells us that Christ paid the price, and that we are saved through faith in him. God saves us by his grace, and we make an act of faith. What we do, we do as a result, because our response to God's act in Christ is to become obedient servants who seek to be worthy of our calling.

You can liken biblical history to an hourglass. History begins on the universal level of creation. It narrows down to a covenant with one people. It finally centers on one man sent by God. It broadens out again to the Church. Finally, it reaches to the whole of mankind with the reminder that Christ died for the redemption of mankind.

CHURCH

The fourth act of the drama of redemption is the Church, the community of the Holy Spirit. At this point, you and I become actors in the biblical drama. We participate in this drama set on the stage of history, as by our baptism we become incorporated in the body of which Christ is the head and all baptized persons are members.

We see the Church in history as coming from the work of God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. God acts in and through the Church to reveal himself and to make available the means of grace. The Church is primarily a community, a fellowship, a participation in and a sharing of the Holy Spirit. It is those who are called out of the alien society of the world into the deepest possible fellowship. It is a redemptive and sustaining community in which God works to restore the relationship of love to God and neighbor. Activities of the Church as an institution are justified only as they serve this primary goal.

Christian education exists in the Church as learners share in the lore and tradition and heritage of the Church and as they experience the redemptive love of God *now* in community. The quality of life in the congregation, in terms of faith and grace more than works, is the atmosphere in which people can grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

CONSUMMATION

The drama of revelation and redemption goes on to the fifth act, and we are already there too, because the fifth act is breathing down our necks. Everybody is going to die, and death means judgment. Furthermore, God's judgment stands over the processes of history with the prophetic demand for social justice. And in the end, God's judgment stands at the end of history. The consummation of God's purpose for us comes with judgment, and judgment means to make everything right, to straighten things out, to continue to pay the price for man's disobedience. If we accept this judgment in faith, we may hope for resurrection unto eternal life; but if we reject that judgment, it becomes retributive, and the sheep are separated from the goats.

THE BIBLE STORY

This is the story the Bible tells. Perhaps I might anticipate what needs to be said about relevance. Can you think of anyone who has not been created? Is there any creature who has not experienced separation from his Creator? Is there anyone who has not come up against the whole structure of natural and moral law? Has anyone never had the experience of being drawn back into a fellowship out of which he has been cast? Do children ever forgive pigheaded parents, or vice versa? Does anyone feel the uplifting power of a Christian community? Does God stand in judgment on us? Can anyone escape from the story that the Bible tells?

The Bible story centers on Jesus, who lived and died and rose again and was remembered. The Bible is the Church's memory of him. But the mystery is even deeper, because the Jesus who was remembered is known still as the living Christ. He is the head of the Church. He is the host at the Lord's Table at Holy Communion. One of the Communion hymns begins:

Come, risen Lord, and deign to be our guest;
Nay, let us be thy guests; the feast is thine.

In some mysterious way, Christ is present at the Holy Communion. He is known still in the life of the Church. Then he is interpreted, and we become theologians.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Christian education is understood when it is seen against the background of this view of the biblical revelation. Adelaide Case's definition is the best I know: "Christian education is the effort to make available for our generation—children, young people, and adults—the accumulated treasures of Christian life and thought, in such a way that God in Christ may carry on his redemptive work in each human soul and in the common life of man."³

Look what this brings into the picture. Christian life and thought includes the Bible, the story of great Christians, and the history of the Church. This great heritage is a resource for the Christian education of both children and adults. God carries on his redemptive work, his saving work, his healing work in each individual for whom we are responsible in the common life of our congregation and community. If this redemptive element does not become the central focus of the picture, it is not Christian

³ See Dora P. Chaplin, *Children and Religion*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, p. 136; my *Education for Christian Living*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1956, p. 54.

education. It may be the factual teaching of knowledge, of history of the Church, or of systematic theology; it can be lots of things, but it is not Christian education.

RELEVANCE

Now we come to the problem of *relevance*. The important thing about the gospel is that it meets real needs. It speaks for the fact that we are created, that we come up against law and order, that we need to be saved by Christ, that we find our maturity of faith in the fellowship of the Church, and that we recognize that we stand under judgment.

The gospel speaks to our need to be loved. In the language of little children it says, "Jesus loves me; this I know, for the Bible tells me so." God loves us so much that while we are still sinners Christ died for us. No matter how bad I am, God loves me. Paul Tillich puts it this way: What we have to learn to do is to accept the fact that we are accepted. We do not need to ask what we have to do or say or think. In time to come, we discover who accepts us and what we have to do. Among other things, God puts a demand upon us to accept others as they are.⁴

Now I find that church-school teachers have a great deal of difficulty with this demand on them. They come and say, "Do you mean that in this class of children who have been making my life miserable I have to accept them as they are?" And if I answer, "Christ died for them," they say, "Well, Christ may have died for them, but why should I?" Isn't this the point at which the gospel's demands become relevant?

The Bible shows us that the God of love is also revealed as a God of justice. We who need to be loved also need order and structure in our lives. A love without structure reminds me of the pacifism of a jelly fish. It is a terrible thing when a child is loved without that love having any structure. But we need to be accepted as we are before discipline serves as structure. The problem of freedom and authority, which is at the center of all teen-age religious difficulties, can be solved only in terms of the priority of love over discipline, but with discipline serving its proper function.

The trouble with teen-agers is that they do not know where they stand. At one moment they are seemingly mature and capable of genuine decisions and responsibilities, and at the next moment they revert to childhood and need the most careful kind of control. But even as the teen-ager is not sure at which level he is operating, so it is difficult for the adult to

⁴ See *Shaking the Foundations*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948, p. 162.

outguess him. If a boy asks his father for the car, father cannot very well ask: "At what age-level are you planning to behave, fourteen or eighteen?" Yet that is precisely the problem of the relevance of the gospel to the situation.

The God of love and justice is also a God of grace. The gospel becomes relevant at one's growing edge, and he must have freedom to grow in accord with the laws of God. The Christian educator can only plant and water, and God provides the increase. But the educator may either help to stunt that growth or to encourage it. In so far as the teacher is truly a channel of God's grace, genuine Christian nurture takes place.

The God who reveals himself as loving and just and gracious is also holy. He is so utterly beyond man that only in awe do we appear before him. This sense of mystery is basic to man, and if it is not satisfied in terms of the Christian revelation, it will be partially satisfied in terms of superstition or false gods. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and our education is Christian only when this sense of worship before the holy of holies is made available to the learners.

RELIGIOUS READINESS

Relevance is applied in terms of religious readiness. Most of us are familiar with age-group characteristics. Developmental psychology has much to say that is significant for religious readiness, but it does not tell the whole story.

Because Christianity is a historical religion, one of our chief difficulties lies at the point of history. Normally a child begins to think historically in about the fifth grade. In the fourth grade, local history is a possibility, but it cannot be combined with geography. To bring together a period of two thousand years ago and a land half-way around the earth obviously demands a partly developed imagination.

Does this mean we cannot teach the Bible below the fifth grade? In so far as we rely on chronology and geography, the answer is obviously No. But if we begin by asking to what extent it is relevant to deal with the fact that a child has been created, has experienced law, has been forgiven, has shared in the fellowship of the Church, and has stood under judgment, it is obvious that the Bible has answers for his needs. So the question needs to be recast: "How can we take biblical history and make it contemporary in the lives of little children?"

If the teacher has a biblical faith, the Bible can come alive in the atmosphere of the classroom. Religious readiness is the point at which a

person can reach out and make contact with the meaning of his world. This world is smaller when a child is in a playpen than when he takes his first trip across the Sahara Desert, but the child is just as much loved of God in the playpen as on the Sahara. The goal of Christian education is the relevance of the gospel *now*. Because Christ died for us almost two thousand years ago, he is the Christ who died for us *now*, not next year, not ten years hence, but *now*.

Theology is relevant to life, for it is truth-about-God-in-relation-to-man. The relevant truth of Christian revelation speaks to every man in every condition, offering him the hope of a new relationship with God and his fellows and ultimately the hope of resurrection unto eternal life.

RELATIONSHIPS

This leads us to the question of *relationships*. The gospel offers us primarily the *gift of a new relationship*. "God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself": this is a description of the new relationship. The story of the Prodigal Son describes a broken relationship that is restored by the love of the father. The story of the Lost Coin is of a restored relationship. The coin was lost and is found; the sheep was lost and is found; we are dead with Christ and are risen with him. The basic motif of Christian living which is found in the death and resurrection of Christ is the relationship which all of us experience in one way or another. In the puppy-love stage it is "kiss and make up," but it is still heartbreak followed by healing, and the kiss symbolizes a new as well as a restored relationship.

But there is a uniqueness about the gift of the new relationship in Christ, because it never existed before. God in Christ did something new, so that we can say, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Something new has happened, and it happens to us in our baptism; it is offered as we make our confession of faith; it is offered as we respond in faith to God's free gift of grace.

This relationship is a form of communication. When we communicate what is relevant in the gospel to any age level, it is always in terms of relationships. Often the relationships deny the meaning of the words. You know the story of the kindergarten class. They are in the church service and hear a description of heaven and hell. Heaven is described with the fervor of the California Chamber of Commerce, and hell is described in terms of summer weather in Death Valley. The children are assured that God loves them and they are told that they should want to go to heaven. And at the conclusion, it is announced, "The kindergarten will now go to

their class in the basement room next to the furnace." This teaches them that although we say they are made for heaven, the congregation has assigned them to hell.

Relationships teach. If children are rejected, unwanted, and ignored, we can shout, "Let the children come to me," and all they will hear is the old translation, "Suffer the little children. Period."

This places a primary responsibility on the teacher. The teacher becomes a channel of God's grace. This is the heart of Christian teaching. Only when the teacher accepts the learner as he is can the teacher talk about God's love so that it is meaningful. This is difficult, and it can be achieved only by those teachers who know they need God's grace.

People worry about the materials and methods they are going to use, and they should worry. But the teacher who has achieved the right relationship with the class may use poor materials and methods more effectively than the teacher who has no such relationship can use good materials and methods. Children who have learned about the gospel in church school usually remember their teachers better than their lessons.

REDEMPTION

The word "redemption" usually does not mean much until someone is willing to pay the price. "The Glenn Miller Story" told of a young musician's financial difficulties. Between jobs he would place his trombone in a pawnshop. When he received a new job, he would redeem the trombone. His trombone could not get out of the shop unless someone came in and paid the price. With this story, it is amazing how high-school students can see the idea of redemption. "Sure," they say, "we're in hock, too. We're in hock to the devil, and the only one who can get us out is Christ." A rather nonliturgical way of putting it, perhaps, but it is pretty close to the truth.

All of the theories of the atonement say that Christ did something for us that we could not do. We are made one with God by the act of Christ. We are redeemed, brought back. The experience of redemption in daily life comes when by the power of grace we are forgiven and our relationships are restored. This is our ministry of reconciliation.

I AND THOU

Martin Buber's interpretation of the I-Thou relationship takes this experience to a deeper level. We are not redeemed in the same way as was Glenn Miller's trombone, because we are persons and not things. Miller's

relationship to his trombone was to an instrument, but his relation to the leader of the band, Ben Pollock, was to a person.

The relationships between redeemed sinners are in terms of "I" and "thou." They treat each other as ends in themselves and not as things to be used. Because we are creatures of the Creator, who values us so much that he sent his Son for our redemption, we need to learn how to serve other persons. The high-school student can see this in terms of dating, petting, obeying parents, and getting along with teachers. As one girl put it, "I went to a dance with Jim and treated him as an 'it.' I used Jim to get me to the dance so I could dance with Joe." This girl had a pretty good insight into the meaning of the gospel and was confessing her sin in terms of relationships.

In these personal relationships God enters into relationships with us through other persons. The Church is the redemptive community, the community of persons through whom God's grace is channeled. Not all local congregations achieve this quality of life, and as a result programs of Christian education founder upon the rock of indifference to the learners.

If education is to be Christian, the starting point is an examination of the life of the local parish. As individuals and groups become aware of the demands of the gospel in terms of the needs of the learners, the Christian revelation will become relevant in terms of relationships. Preaching, the sacraments, worship, and other activities of the congregation will help to bolster those whose desire is to live in faith.

METHODS

We have not dealt with methods as such, but you may have noticed that methods have been coming into the picture all the way along the line. Method is not a series of techniques or gadgets by which you use the tricks of the trade to fool children or adults. Method is never candy-coated aspirinum, or orange juice with castor oil, but a lot of Sunday-school teaching is like that.

Method derives from the subject matter, and any method is valid if it communicates the joy and the abundance and the challenge and the hope of the gospel in terms of the relationships of the students where they are *now*. Method is organically connected with the gospel itself.

How did Jesus teach? With stories out of books? No. He used stories of real people in contemporary situations, and always he could say, "Go and do likewise." He taught in terms of their everyday experiences, and he brought in the whole lore of tradition from the Old Testament to

bear upon the present problem. He quoted time after time from the Old Testament, but he quoted it in a new context where it came alive in terms of love for the individual.

Not that Jesus was afraid to be scathing in his denunciations. But whom did he denounce? The children? The obvious evil doers? He protected the defenseless harlot and told her that he did not condemn her. He was kind to the tax collector and mixed with the drinkers. He saved his words of denunciation for those who were going to be cast into outer darkness, and these were the respectable people who did good things and thanked themselves for it.

The gospel speaks to those who know they are separated from the Lord and need to be redeemed. It speaks to those who know that God has redeemed them even when they do not deserve it. The gospel offers hope to both children and adults. Our assumption is that the whole gospel is relevant to the needs of everyone, and that through what we call the language of relationships it is possible for God to work in human community, especially through the home and Church, to alter our lives and to help us face our essential problems. Therefore, every session of a church school is involved in the understanding of the ultimate meaning of life, as this meaning helps us to overcome the threat to one's existence as a person.

CONCLUSION

The Bible contains the chief source of revelation, but God reveals himself in all events when there are minds divinely illumined to see the meaning of what is happening. This revelation is relevant, but good teaching makes evident the significance of the gospel in our lives, and this shows forth in the relationships which we experience. The gift of the new relationship is always God's act mediated through persons in community. The sustaining of relationships of love is also the gift of God. Our task is to lead persons to that Christian maturity whereby they are enabled to accept these gifts and to live meaningfully in this world now.

Book Reviews

Systematic Theology, Vol. II: Existence and the Christ. By PAUL TILLICH.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957. xi-187 pp. \$4.50.

In this small but weighty volume, which contains the substance of his first series of Gifford Lectures, given at Aberdeen University, Dr. Tillich presents the second division of his systematic theology. Readers of Vol. I (on "Reason and Revelation" and "Being and God"), who have been eagerly awaiting the next installment, will regret that they must still wait for the remaining themes, "Life and the Spirit" and "History and the Kingdom of God," to be dealt with in a third volume; but meanwhile they have been given a good deal to occupy their minds. Compared with the massive volumes of Barth's *Dogmatik*—the only other synthesis of commensurate importance in contemporary Protestantism—Tillich's *Systematic Theology* may look rather slim, but his tidy sentences and compact paragraphs go straight to the heart of the matter. In fact, most readers will probably feel that many of Tillich's arguments would have been easier to grasp and assess if they had been presented more discursively; as it is, the concentrated theses make an unusual demand on one's attention.

This volume begins with a two-part "Introduction," in which the author first explains the relation of his present topic to his first volume and to his whole system, and then restates three of the major points of Vol. I: (a) his doctrine of God, "Beyond Naturalism and Supernaturalism"; (b) his vindication of "The Use of the Concept of Being in Systematic Theology"; (c) his conception of the "Interdependence and Interdependence of Existential Questions and Theological Answers," fundamental to his famous "method of correlation." The body of the volume consists of two sections; one, entitled "Existence and the Quest for the Christ," formulates the "existential questions" to which Christology must speak, while the other, "The Reality of the Christ," presents the theological answers. A detailed table of contents and a full index are provided. While misprints are few, several should be noted, as possibly obscuring the sense. "Evaluation" (p. 82, l. 35) should presumably be "elevation," and "created" would make more obvious sense than "creative" (p. 73, l. 13). On p. 149, l. 21, "*sarse*" should be "*sarx*." And is the sentence beginning "This view" (p. 122, 9-10) complete?

Almost every page offers arrestingly fresh insights, impossible to enumerate in a short review. This reviewer was especially impressed by the introductory reflections on the concept of being, with their critique both of "personalistic theology" and of the nominalistic view of God as "a particular," "the most individual of all beings" (pp. 10-12); by the analysis of "freedom" and its relation to "destiny" (pp. 31-33, 41 ff., 62 ff., etc.); by the discussion of the relation of Jesus' words, deeds, and suffering to the "New Being" manifested in the Christ (pp. 121-25); by the treatment of Jesus' human finitude and freedom (pp. 125-35); and by the brief statement on his continuity with the old Israel and with the Church (pp. 135 f.). No reader is likely to agree with all that Tillich says here or elsewhere, but the importance of his presentation of the issues is unquestionable.

The primary theme of the volume is generally regarded as one of the most sensitive areas of Tillich's theology, and will obviously be the center of interest for

most readers. Tillich has repeatedly been accused of a failure to take seriously the irreducibly historical element in Christian belief—alike in his "ontological" interpretation of original sin and in his treatment of the relation of historical investigation to the acceptance of Jesus as the Christ—and these questions are central in this volume.

As for original sin, this reviewer must confess that the disquiet he felt on first hearing Tillich on this subject in the classroom has been aggravated rather than allayed by this newest statement. It would be misleading to call Tillich's doctrine "Gnostic," since he distinguishes creaturely finitude from fallenness by affirming the presence of man's "essential nature" in every aspect of his life, despite "existential distortion" (p. 33). And yet, granted this partial qualification, we are confronted here, as in Gnosticism, with a basically ontological view of sin, which identifies "actualized creation" with "estranged existence" (p. 44) in a way that seems to make estrangement intrinsically inseparable from real, individual being. Once creaturely goodness is identified with essence and potentiality, while existence and actuality become synonyms for distortion and estrangement, this estrangement can be nothing less than an ontological fate.

Part of the trouble seems to lie in the way in which Tillich reacts against what he rightly regards as the absurd idea of the Fall as historical event with substantial physical consequences (p. 67). Having chosen to resolve this theological dilemma (inherited from Protestant orthodoxy) by interpreting fallenness in ontological, non-historical categories, rather than by reconsidering the Fall in genuinely historical terms, he sets his highly perceptive analyses of man's "existential" situation in the rigid framework of his metaphysics of essence and existence—and from this point onwards an effective distinction between finitude and fallenness is impossible.

One motive of this decisive choice is undoubtedly the genuine difficulty involved in *any* historical interpretation of the Fall, a difficulty which becomes less radical once we recognize the dual character of fallenness as "deprivation of grace" and "wounding of nature," and the dialectic of grace and nature which this duality presupposes in all human life. Tillich, however, is ultimately prevented from considering this approach by his doctrine of divine being, which, for all his concern to map out the path already traced by the greatest theologians between naturalism and a crude "supranaturalism," seems in the end to deny God's ontological transcendence of nature, and so to exclude the real historical interaction of divine grace and human freedom.

All this necessarily affects the second part of the volume, which has to do with the overcoming of estrangement. For example, while much of what he says about the defects of the patristic-conciliar Christological terminology demands careful attention—not least because of his sympathetic approach to the motives of the traditional teaching—his critique of the conceptual form of the "two-natures" Christology, which he discusses with much less of a sensitive understanding than he usually displays, is explicitly related to his metaphysical theology and his ontology of human existence (p. 147). The same factors are subtly influential in the full discussion of the problem of historicity, which is basic to this section of the volume. We must note that Tillich leaves no room for doubt as to his belief in the factual ground of the "picture of Jesus as the Christ." Nonetheless, despite this factual core, which he sees as a certainty of faith and not simply a probability of historical research, and despite his interesting and subtle concept of the analogy between fact and "picture" (p. 115), Tillich allows for a more comprehensive skepticism about historical facts than many theologians will be able to accept.

Tillich might well answer—since his sensitiveness to historical difficulties is once more in evidence—that his critics must at least face the problem of historical knowledge with the same openness and courage. But his critics may wonder, in turn, whether a theology which took seriously the action of the transcendent God in concrete historical events could long endure the combination of such a full Christology, based on the "picture," with so nearly total a suspense of judgment regarding its factual basis. At any rate, we may be sure that Dr. Tillich will not mind being proved wrong, if in the process someone works out a better answer to this or to any of the many questions which he raises in so illuminating a fashion.

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Essays in Christology for Karl Barth. Edited by T. H. L. PARKER. Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson (Lutterworth Press), 1956. 297 pp. \$5.00.

This volume of twelve essays, mainly by younger Scottish theologians, presented to Karl Barth on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, is an illuminating contribution to Barthian theology. The writers have obviously gone beyond the usual brawl between "liberalism and neo-orthodoxy." The Christological orientation of this book, and of Barth himself, takes us beyond the simple opposition between God and man characteristic of theological debate some quarter of a century ago. Since Jesus Christ himself was God and man, an authentic human being as well as God the Son, if we allow our theology to be governed by him, we arrive at a genuine possibility of thinking of God's relationship to man in a way which takes us beyond the traditional and hopeless controversies about "grace and free will." In so far as Barth and the writers of this volume are determined to think out the significance of the "human nature" of Christ as well as his "divine nature," they are engaged in creative theology of genuine promise.

The doctrine of the two natures of Christ is of decisive consequence for the whole of this volume. Therefore, Professor J. L. M. Haire's chapter, "On Behalf of Chalcedon," requires special attention. Professor Haire defends Chalcedon against modern Christologies which found the divine nature of the Son in his perfect humanity as revealed in his obedience to the will of God (pp. 101-102). He also objects rightly to theories (such as those of L. S. Thornton and E. L. Mascall) which present Jesus as having a nature beyond that of our humanity (pp. 104-107). Professor Haire insists that "the nature which our Lord shares with us is our nature, not some higher one" (p. 108). He says that "reconciliation rather than divinization is at the centre of the Biblical teaching on the work of Christ for Man" (*ibid.*). And since this is so, any obscuring of the two natures of Christ obscures his reconciling work.

Unfortunately, Professor Haire's discussion ends rather abruptly. He fails to discuss adequately how a person of divine and human nature is unqualifiedly a human being. His fellow writer, Professor T. F. Torrance, tells us that "true human response [is] *enhypostatic* in the Word of revelation" (p. 17) and that "from the beginning to the end He [Jesus Christ] is that Word in representative and vicarious action in our midst" (p. 21). This means that Christ is "divine nature" who somehow includes "human nature" (*enhypostasia*). In other words, the action of Jesus as a human being is an outworking of the Word of God.

This book, in spite of its "Chalcedonian" program, fails to present Jesus Christ as

an authentic human being. The "Barthian" jealousy for the free sovereignty of God does not allow Dr. Torrance to stay with the "paradox of Chalcedon." On the other hand, J. B. Torrance, writing on "the priesthood of Jesus," says, "*Enhypostasia* emphasizes that the man Jesus is substituted for us" (p. 169). In short, although this book represents a theological advance in its thesis that the doctrine of the two natures of Christ is central to Christian theology, its statement of the doctrine needs further clarification, and perhaps a fresh approach in the light of further work on the doctrine of the Spirit.

Space does not permit us to discuss the consequences of this emphasis upon the two natures of Christ for the doctrines of Preaching, Sacraments, the Church and the Christian Life, as presented by T. H. L. Parker, J. K. S. Reid, D. Cairns, and R. S. Wallace respectively. One who reads the chapters on these subjects will be impressed with the value of the doctrine of Christ's two natures as an organizing principle in Christian thinking. Take, for instance, Parker's statement: "In the [preaching of the] Gospel the Word made flesh Himself comes and meets with His People . . . through human words, which taken up by the Holy Spirit, become one with the eternal Word made flesh" (p. 184). Cairns asks: "Is there not some analogy of the relationship between Christ's mission and the Church's mission in the relationship between the Divine Word and the human word in the proclamation of the Gospel?" (p. 225.) The answer is yes. It turns out that the doctrine of the two natures of Christ is an excellent principle for Christian thinking in every direction. At the end of the book there is a highly suggestive chapter on "Philosophy and Christology" by D. M. Mackinnon.

Here is a "different" and stimulating treatment of Christian theology. We hope that reading it will induce many to turn to Barth, whose *Church Dogmatics* is being gradually translated into English.

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Kingdom and Church: A Study in the Theology of the Reformation. By T. F. TORRANCE. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1956. viii-168 pp. 16s.

Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5. By KARL BARTH. Translated by T. A. Smail. (Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers, No. 5.) Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1956. 45 pp. 6s.

The emergence of eschatology to a place of decisive importance in the theology of the Reformation corresponds in a curious way to the change in cosmology which was introduced by Copernicus. For if the interpretation of the relation between heaven and earth in static, analogical terms, which was characteristic of medieval thought, had its cosmological basis in the Ptolemaic world view, this basis was destroyed by the Copernican revolution, which obliterated the distinction between heaven and earth and set both of them in motion. In this regard the reopening of the eschatological perspective in the work of the Reformers may be called the Copernican revolution in theology, though in fact it was well begun before the publication of Copernicus' main work in 1543.

The principal differences which emerged at the Reformation on doctrines like justification, the church, the sacraments, etc., may be traced to the clash between a static and analogical approach on the one side and another which was dynamic and

dialectical. It is most evident in the quickened interest of the Reformers in the two *states* of Christ, in contrast to the preoccupation of Catholicism with the two *natures*; it was not so much in the hypostatic union as rather in the progression of Christ through humiliation to exaltation that the Reformers saw the pattern for the life of the Christian and the church. The immediate consequence of this changed perspective was that the relation of kingdom and church, which was no problem for medieval Catholicism, became the most absorbing problem for the Reformers.

How Luther, Butzer (more familiar as Bucer), and Calvin approached this new problem is the theme of this scholarly and penetrating book by Professor Torrance. On the basis of a carefully documented study he advances the thesis (which he does not wish to overdrive) that Luther's is an eschatology of faith, Butzer's an eschatology of love, and Calvin's an eschatology of hope. By this he means that Luther's eschatology is dominated by the thought of the judgment and the end of the world and the trials of the church under this present world-order (as may be seen in *Ein' feste Burg*); Butzer's by the thought of the church as the communion of love in which the eternal kingdom is present in a temporary form; and Calvin's by the thought of the church's foretaste of glory as an incentive by which it is spurred on to action.

Barth's essay on *Christ and Adam*, to which Professor Torrance contributes a foreword, has this in common with his book, that it too is concerned with the analogy of Christ. It is an attempt to come to grips with the problem of man and humanity on the basis of the parallel between Christ and Adam, which Paul elaborates in Romans 5. By means of a detailed exegesis of this chapter Barth argues that the *formal* parallel between Christ and Adam is overshadowed by the *material* disparity between them, and maintains the characteristic thesis that it is in Christ, not in Adam, that the true nature of man and the unity of man and humanity are revealed; the Christian is, in fact, the universally human. The essay will afford English readers a good opportunity to form an impression of Barth's Christological anthropology.

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Christian Ethics. By GEORGIA HARKNESS. New York: Abingdon Press, 1957. 240 pp. \$3.75.

Christian Living. By STEPHEN F. BAYNE, JR. *The Church's Teaching*, Vol. V. Greenwich, Conn.: The Seabury Press, 1957. x-341 pp. \$3.50 (paper, \$1.50).

To review a single volume on the subject of Christian ethics is a relatively easy task. To review two such books is difficult and confusing to the mind. For the fundamental question raised by any two books on this subject is whether there is any common body of practical knowledge in the church which may be designated "Christian ethics," or even any agreement as to the method by which an elaboration of Christian moral judgments might be given.

Georgia Harkness defines Christian ethics as "the way of life exemplified and taught by Jesus"; and she admits reference to the ethics of the New Testament generally, or to the whole Bible, to the ethics of churches, the moral standards of Christendom, or the best moral philosophy of all ages only so far as these are consistent with the teachings of Jesus or mere applications of his insights. This approach has a certain value, as a corrective of Brunner's *The Divine Imperative* which lists

in the index forty-six references to Luther, thirty-five to Calvin, twenty to Paul, and none to Jesus. However, the norm itself proves not very objective when the question arises of recovering the original teachings, and the author relies on what Tillich recently called a "*Gestalt* of Jesus" or of his teachings: "Even though the textual accuracy of Luke 19:27 is less disputed than of Luke 23:34, we still believe it is the latter in which the real Jesus speaks."

The volume is better and more theological than the announced method. Later on it is stated that "Agape is still the basic and covering category of Christian ethics"; and with this, rooted in the teachings of Jesus, as normative, the author (after three chapters which deal with biblical ethics and the ethics of the early church) writes briefly on the following themes: God, Sin, and Christian Character, Duties to Self and Society, Marriage and the Family, The Ethics of Economic Life, Christianity and the Race Problem, The Christian Conscience and the State, War, Peace and International Order, and Christianity and Culture. Her aim is to hit the mean between "great books for the serious student" and "overly simple books," and in this she succeeds admirably, as in all her writings—as this reviewer can testify from the impact of *Conflicts of Religious Thought* upon him while a college student.

One point may be singled out for comment. Miss Harkness seeks to define an "intermediate view" between sentimentally blurring the distinction between justice and love, and an inflexible and impersonal view of justice (attributed to Brunner) which restricts love to the personal sphere. Beyond these alternatives, "love for persons gives justice its structure" summarizes a more adequate Christian position; and this helps to clarify what realistic pacifists believe. Yet the contrast between Harkness and Brunner is not that the latter rigidly separates the spheres of justice and love. It is rather that Brunner believes that, in their relationship, *justice gives love its structure*. The real problem is whether Christian action knows how to overcome the degree of opposition that remains between these two propositions.

Stephen Bayne, Episcopal Bishop of the Northwest diocese of Olympia, has written the concluding volume (in order of appearance) of his Church's teaching series; and all six are helpfully indexed in this volume. The title of this book makes it a little unfair to raise questions about the basic methodology of Christian *ethics*, for maybe this is an art and not a matter of *scientia* or of criteria for making moral decisions. Yet the gulf between the approach taken in this volume, and that of the other, comes out most clearly in what is said about fasting. The Prayer Book sets down two strict fasts each year, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, and a series of other days of special self-denial: the forty days of Lent, the Ember Days, etc. For this not to be a Christian duty "we would have to know that human nature has changed so radically since the Incarnation that much of our Lord's teaching has no significance or meaning for us any more." All this hinges upon the fact that in Matt. 6:16-18 our Lord "takes it for granted that we will fast." Plainly the teachings of Jesus are "consistent" with a great many things, and many types of behavior in the church may be regarded as mere "applications" of his insights. This situation must trouble the reader of as many as two books about Christian ethics.

This having been pointed out, the book should be considered for what it attempts. The heart of it is in three parts, entitled "Personal Life, Family, and Work," "Church, Community, and Nation," and "National and International Life" (preceded by an opening part on "Freedom and the Free Man"). The general reader, he who is "an attempting Christian" of whatever denomination, will gain a great deal from reading these pages. In a day when "most men live lives of quiet desperation" (Thoreau)

vegetating before television sets, it is salutary to hear the call to personal religious living put under the headings of Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving (when these things are explained as "thinking about ourselves and our neighbors in the presence of God," commemorating weekly our redemption by staking out a fresh claim for Christ every Friday, and the use of money as a sacramental penetration of matter by spirit); to have it pointed out that the family itself is the Church, to base our "vocation" on the biblical view of God's summons to us in our very own name, to read that the practice of calling corpses in secular funeral parlors "he" or "she"—or even "Helen"—is "an obscenity almost without parallel in Christian minds." There is an excellent chapter on marriage, in which is discussed, among other things, the reversal of the order of the purposes of marriage and the "largely new ground in Christian thinking" of taking into account in divorce cases the "grave defects of personality in either party" which "make real consent impossible." (The really new departure, historically, in recognizing "causes arising after marriage" is reduced to a footnote.) There is also a chapter on death, which after all is a part of personal Christian living.

Bishop Bayne believes strongly that the goal of the ecumenical movement is unity, and not co-operation alone: this is a function not of a low but of a high view of the church and its importance. But space allows no more than mention of the treatment of the Christian life in the church, in politics, in relation to minorities and other races, liberty, patriotism, and the international community. All this is very much worth reading, although too often the articulation of a theme relies not-so-good-sermon-wise on "six great Gospel words" or "seven fields" of Christian action.

Here, then, are two good books for the thoughtful layman. The first rests ethics upon the teachings of Jesus. The other grounds our practice in the *ethos* of the church. For, while Bishop Bayne says that "no clergyman or group can require of the Churchman anything which cannot certainly pass the test of Holy Scripture," he continues on the same page, "But if anyone were to go so far as to reject entirely the right of this representative body of the clergy and laity of the Church to define our duties, then it would be open to question whether he truly intended to be a member of the Church at all." Each volume in itself is edifying. Taken together, they raise serious question whether there is such a thing as Christian ethics. Fortunately there is no call for comment in this review upon two other recently published works on ethics—in one, contextualism triumphs (A. T. Rasmussen); for the other, the whole Bible is a "particularization" of the will of God, its entire content a revealed theoretical and practical view of life (Carl F. H. Henry).

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Christianity and World Issues. By T. B. MASTON. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957. ix-374 pp. \$5.00.

This book, written by a professor of Christian Ethics (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary), is in the form of a textbook. The subject matter is organized under clearly defined heads and the presentation is concise and well documented. Short but well chosen book lists are supplied for each chapter. These together with the numerous footnotes furnish a broad outlook for both teacher and student. The primary point of view is that of a chastened liberalism. Discussions of the major issues of social ethics by recent theologians, philosophers, and historians are drawn upon to

give an understanding of both the complexity and the depth dimension of the present predicament of man. The basic presuppositions of the book are Christian and even biblical, if a distinction is to be made, but the "Christian" is not to be taken as dogmatism, and the "biblical" is not to be taken as literalism.

Inevitably, there is much more of analysis and criticism of the contemporary life of the world than there is of solution offered. But there are frank judgments made from the outset. The writer does not promise that a faithful following of the Christian way will speedily or even eventually extricate the world from its crisis. But he does hold that the demand for the Christian and the Christian Church to make its clear witness in both word and deed is the will of God, and that the Gospel is relevant to every essential form of the crisis of our civilization. Christians should be in the world with all their might although they must not be of the world. The Church cannot commit itself to or identify itself with any policy or program in politics, education, or social engineering. But it must live in the midst of the life of men and furnish them an ultimate orientation to give courage and meaning to life.

With such a methodology the major issues are analyzed, stated, and discussed: family, race, economics, communism, church and state, war and peace. The historic background and development of these issues as we now confront them are given in each case. Both philosophies and theological teachings are brought to bear. The judgments derived from such a study and a critical description of the present state of the world are well balanced. The author does not ride a hobby. He evidently has no crystal ball. He has read Spengler and Toynbee and others. He knows about the apocalyptic expectation in religious circles. But he does not adopt a theory by which prediction can be made. He sees no grounds for perfectionism or utopianism. But he does believe that Christian love and the bearing of the cross are real powers in the human process, and he has the courage to commend the basic methods of the Church as the direct form of its constructive contribution to a better world: evangelism, education (in Christian truth and its ethical meaning), demonstration (Christian vocation and active participation in Christian strategies), legislation, and prayer.

There is no defeatist spirit in the book. It is recognized that man must always live in tension, and that in his precarious existence no guarantee can be given of success for even the wisest and best efforts. The issue is in the hand of God, but God is faithful.

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The Theology of the Sacraments. By D. M. BAILLIE (with biographical essay by JOHN BAILLIE). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957. 158 pp. \$3.00.

Undoubtedly this posthumous gift of Donald Baillie's will have an extensive and highly salutary influence. It will go far to help correct one of the saddest phenomena of modern Protestantism—the loss of understanding of the spiritual necessity of the sacraments.

The book is written with the beautiful limpidity of style for which both the Baillies are justly famous. Not only will ministers enjoy the book and be helped toward a richer ministry in worship and devotion, but most laymen also ought to be able to receive its instruction with little difficulty. There has been too much of a tendency for Protestant churches to pride themselves on being "preaching churches,"

without realizing that to allow this emphasis to become one-sided is to rush headlong into sectarianism—contrary to the belief of Dr. Baillie and all his more authoritative Presbyterian forebears that the Lord's Supper "from the very beginning in the New Testament was the central service of the Christian Church" (p. 92).

The method of the book is dogmatically fruitful. The first part of the discussion ("Sacrament, Nature, and Grace") lays foundations in the doctrine of creation. For it is impossible to understand the sacraments if, out of a false evangelicalism, one imagines that the doctrine of redemption is everything. Therefore Baillie first speaks of "A Sacramental Universe," "Body and Spirit," and "Faith and Grace." He then goes on in the Second Lecture to show how the sacraments arise from the *historical* character of Christ's redemption, and treats of "The Dominical Institution," "The Sacraments as an Extension of the Incarnation," and "The Eschatological Nature of the Sacraments." While rejecting the notion of an extension of the Incarnation, he nevertheless insists upon a continuity between the Incarnation and the sacraments. Problems are left at this point because he makes this continuity "wholly dependent upon the Word and the Spirit" (p. 66).

Coming to the sacraments in particular, he takes up Baptism in Lecture III. He deals with points that really worry people—the questions of the institution, of immersion, and of infant baptism. There is a grand and full simplicity of understanding—historical, psychological, theological—in his dealing with this last matter.

Lecture IV is on the Real Presence. One rejoices to find a Reformed scholar setting aside mere polemics and extracting all the personal values that the theory of transubstantiation attempts to safeguard, while himself holding another view. The reviewer thinks that Baillie has not sufficiently appreciated Calvin's reasons for insisting upon the presence of Christ's "vivifying flesh," which he unfortunately rejects as crude. Things which he says earlier about the place of the body should have enabled him to do a little better at this point. Calvin knew that if we say, as Baillie does (p. 101), that "Christ is truly present to the faith of the receiver," we must say this of the *whole Christ*. But the chapter achieves the great purpose of affirming that Christ really appears at his Table.

Lecture V will perhaps do more good, ecumenically speaking, than any of the others. For here we have what will be for many Protestants their first introduction to the question of "The Eucharistic Offering," and new worlds will open before their wondering eyes. Many will be surprised to find how much a Reformed teacher can and ought to affirm regarding the sacrificial character of Holy Communion: "In the sacrament, Christ Himself being truly present, He unites us by faith with His eternal sacrifice, that we may plead and receive its benefits and offer ourselves in prayer and praise to God" (p. 118). He might have pointed out that the eating of the bread is not that of an ordinary meal but communion in the sacrificed body of Christ.

The book gives us a large entry into the spiritually enriching mind and heart of the lecturer. More also is done for us in this regard through the section, "Donald: a Brother's Impression," and by two further papers of Donald's, "Philosophers and Theologians on the Freedom of the Will," and "The Preaching of Christian Doctrine." An index of authors quoted is supplied. A few slips in proofreading become serious only at one place ("... what St. Augustine calls the *verbum invisibile*, the invisible word," p. 51).

DAVID W. HAY

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Man's Western Quest. By DENIS DE ROUGEMONT. Translated by Montgomery Belgion. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957. xxiv-197 pp. \$3.00.

Though M. de Rougemont's latest book occasionally displays the polemical genius and those qualities of wit and intelligence that make his first major work (*Love in the Western World*) one of the great books of our time, I found myself recurrently overtaken during the reading of it by a sense of weariness and tedium. This was doubtless, in part, a consequence of the infelicities of diction and the syntactical clumsiness by which the writing is so badly marred and which are, I suspect, a feature not of the original text but rather of Mr. Montgomery Belgion's translation. But, if my own experience with the book approximates that of other readers, my guess would be that perhaps the fundamental explanation lies in the degree to which M. de Rougemont did really succeed in following out the kinds of directives that were probably given to him by the editor of the series "World Perspectives," in which this volume appears.

I do not know who Miss Ruth Nanda Anshen is, though I am told that she presides over a bright and exclusive *salon* somewhere amidst one of the many literary and intellectual worlds of New York City, and that there she reigns as a kind of high priestess of the intellectual life; but whoever she is, from the many anthologies and symposia of hers that I have run into off and on over the last ten or fifteen years, I gather that she is a woman who believes that the human community is now in a bad way and who would, therefore, like to sound a clarion call that might rout the Enemy and brace us up to live the real and earnest life that is today man's burden. I do not now have by memory the titles of any of these volumes, though my recollection is that they have sounded very much like (with apologies to Dr. Trueblood) *The Predicament of Modern Man* or *The Crisis of the Modern Spirit* or *Man and the Meaning of His Freedom*. But whatever may be the titles, or indeed the ultimate merits, of these books, my point is that the public role of anthologist and editor which Miss Anshen has chosen to enact is of the sort that permits one to imagine her as an earnest, solemn, high-minded humanitarian who supposes that if a sufficient amount of intelligence is marshaled under the banners of some sort of broad, unrestrictive religious eclecticism, the course of events may then be altered through the force of the printed word. And thus one is also prepared to imagine that the planning and editing of the series of books that is now under way may perhaps constitute for her the climax of a career, for, in this project, she has enlisted thirty-nine writers who run the gamut from Paul Tillich and Jacques Maritain to Swami Nikhilananda and Radhakrishnan, and from Fr. Martin D'Arcy and W. H. Auden to Hu-Shih and D. T. Suzuki.

Miss Anshen's is a mind that is beautifully—and devastatingly—disclosed in the initial sentence of the Foreword that she has prepared for *Man's Western Quest* (which is the thirteenth volume among the published books in her series). She says: "*World Perspectives* is dedicated to the concept of man born out of a universe perceived through a fresh vision of reality." Then she goes on to tell us that "each author treats his subject from the broad perspective of the world community, not from the Judaeo-Christian, Western or Eastern viewpoint alone." And through ten pages she proceeds to elaborate a rationale for such a "broad perspective," and it proves to be, I must admit, quite beyond my comprehension. She tells us that "an enlarged meaning of life, of biology, not as it is revealed in the test tube of the laboratory but as it is experienced within the organism of life itself is attempted in this Series," and she seems inclined to promise us that the series will help contemporary man "to transcend his

existential limits"—and so on and on she goes, all within "the broad perspective of the world community."

Well, we can only thank heaven that the authors of such previously published books in the series as *Approaches to God* (Jacques Maritain) and *Dynamics of Faith* (Paul Tillich) were not taken in by the solemn sort of nonsense that Miss Anshen seems to find inspiring; but I dwell upon it at such length because I suspect that M. de Rougemont was sufficiently polite to take his editor seriously—and, when one recalls the brilliance of much of his previous work, one can only regret his courteousness on this present occasion, for it has badly disabled what might have been an interesting and a bracing book.

This courteousness is immediately apparent in M. de Rougemont's very first sentence. He says: "The purpose of this book is to describe man's Western Quest, to seek the principles of its coherence, and to compare it with other quests in a world perspective." From there on the view widens out upon ever-expanding horizons, and it is the author's dogged determination to serve the "world perspective" that accounts, I believe, for the sponginess and the abstract quality that characterizes so many of the large generalizations that are made in this little book.

The heart of M. de Rougemont's thesis is, I am sure, altogether valid, and as I read the book, it is that the lesson of man's Western Quest must, finally, be read in terms of the lesson of the Incarnation. For that which most radically distinguishes the Occident is the idea of the *person*, which is neither the Greek idea of the autonomous individual nor the Roman idea of the enfranchised citizen but the fusion of these that became possible for the Western imagination when, in the light of the Incarnation, it could see man as more "free than the Greek individual, more fully committed than the Roman citizen, but set free by the very faith that has committed him." To speak of the "human person" before Nicea, says M. de Rougemont, would have been impossible—just as, he wants to say, it is equally impossible today to speak of the West apart from its traditional reverence for the person, for which it is indebted, historically, to the Christian faith. And, beyond even this he reminds us, the essentially *dynamic* character of Western spirituality demands to be understood in terms of the impact of Christianity upon the Occident: here man loves God and his neighbor as himself; he is free, yet responsible; he is *in* history, and yet he *makes* it; he is an autonomous individual, and yet he bears many obligations as a member of an organized society. His life, in other words, is a life that has to be lived always "in tension." And, indeed, the most characteristic fruit of his life—namely, the whole "technical venture" of empirical science—this too is a part of "the strange work of Christ," for "the incarnation of God in space and time, in a human body at a particular date, witnesses for the eyes of the mind to the significance and reality of flesh and matter. . . . And that is why Western man pursues science."

The East, on the other hand, M. de Rougemont points out, represents an entirely different way for man: here the Divine has not entered into imminence, and so the way to salvation involves the rejection of the body and the world. It is a way of "exarnation" rather than of "incarnation"—and the form of the way is not *faith* and *obedience* but *askésis*, the human individual being lost in the crowd or in the Absolute. There may be "adoration of life in general," but this "does not mean respect of human life." And though the West has invented the guillotine and the gas chamber, for us the self is not a temporal illusion, and our cruelty really *matters*; whereas the "Oriental's cruelty is . . . without sin." And so on M. de Rougemont

goes in the manipulation of counters that have long since been made familiar by such Christian interpreters of culture as Berdyaev and Niebuhr and Dawson. And the essay concludes—again, with a polite gesture in the direction of Miss Anshen—with the hope that in our time a real dialogue may be gotten under way between East and West, that we may “compare our dreams,” and that they may “integrate” each other under the guidance of “some transcendental principle” the nature of which, we are told, “Jung in Europe” and “Aurobindo in India . . . have striven to catch a glimpse of.”

Now the two previous books of M. de Rougemont which I know—*Love in the Western World* and *The Devil's Share*—provide ample evidence that he is a man of enormous philosophical and theological sophistication (one of the few laymen of this type, in fact, that Continental Protestantism has produced—in contrast to the British scene, where theologically perspicuous laymen are often more engaging than the professionals). And, indeed, there are interesting and even exciting subtleties of argument that are occasionally present in this book and that, unfortunately, there is not sufficient room in a review to enumerate. But, as I say, the pity of it is that he has allowed himself (out of what I choose to regard as sheer courteousness) to be seduced by his editor—which is the most generous conclusion I can arrive at—into taking up the “world perspective” and into *appearing* to sponsor the kind of woolly-headed syncretism which she advocates. I suspect, however, that he misrepresents himself in this essay and that it may not, therefore, be really necessary to shed any tears over the decline of what has previously shown itself to be a first-rate theological intelligence.

I very much wish that M. de Rougemont had chosen to confine himself to a particular phase of our cultural heritage and that he had undertaken, say, to trace out the fortunes of the idea of the person in Western literature and philosophy. This would, of course, have had to be a bigger book than the present volume, but then we should have gotten something as illuminating and valuable as *Love in the Western World*. But I take it that so limited a perspective was not allowed by his strategist in New York; so instead we have been offered the dubious gift of the large, of the synoptic, of the Olympian view. It is unfortunate. And perhaps the amazement is that, given the beautifully gracious courtesy that is so native to him, even the author of *Dynamics of Faith* managed to hold his own.

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The New Ordeal of Christianity. By PAUL HUTCHINSON. New York: Association Press, 1957. xi-128 pp. \$2.50.

This slim volume is, in a sense, the “last testament” from the hand which formed the thinking of more American ministers more decisively on more issues of the day during the past quarter-century than perhaps any other writer. Such has been the influence of the editorial columns of *The Christian Century*, of which Paul Hutchinson was Managing Editor and then chief Editor.

As the title suggests, the book is intended as a sequel to an earlier work, *The Ordeal of Western Religion* (1933). Five brief chapters survey and appraise the present state and the prospects throughout the world of the Christian movement in its major expressions—Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, World Protestantism,

and American Protestantism. Coming from the mind and pen of a journalist, one of the most gifted and brilliant religious journalists of our time, the narrative is marked by the strengths and limitations of its author's profession—vivid specificity set within an amazingly comprehensive framework; broad, often acute, sometimes too precipitate and overconfident judgments; the contemporaneity of yesterday's headlines which occasionally has become obsolete in today's sequel. But, withal, the honest and passionately earnest reflections of a sensitive, perceptive, extraordinarily well-informed, and constitutionally troubled Christian conscience.

One might wish that Paul Hutchinson's final word were less slight, not only in size but in substance. The surveys of Catholicism and Orthodoxy are models of succinct summary and daring forecast, which cannot fail to educate as well as stimulate all but the best informed. But the concluding discussion of American Protestantism, which one hoped might be climactic, shows unmistakable signs of haste or of failing powers. However, one's major response must be grateful appreciation for this life's tireless devotion to a Cause which he sought to serve as relentless critic.

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

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Lights and Shades of Christendom. By H. PAKENHAM-WALSH. Madras, S.P.C.K. and the Christian Literature Society for India. Three volumes. 1950-1957. Rupees 23.

How well are Indian Christians to know the historical developments out of which their faith and their churches have sprung? How far and how accurately will they become acquainted with the record of Christianity in other centuries and the world around? The questions are important. With the rising tide of Indian nationalism and the quite understandable and legitimate desire of the Christians of India to be autonomous and to be as little dependent as possible upon Christians of other lands, Indian Christianity, and especially Indian Protestantism, is confronted with the peril of being self-centered, of ignoring the background out of which it has sprung, and of being at best only vaguely conscious of the global "community of memory and of hope" of which it is a part. Obviously what is needed is a survey of the entire course of church history which will be available to Indian Christian leaders, which will be within the reach of their pocketbooks, and which will be written with their situation in mind.

Here is an attempt to meet that need, made by one with a long and intimate familiarity with Indian Christianity. Twenty-five years ago Dr. H. Pakenham-Walsh, at one time Bishop in Assam and with more than a generation of experience in India as an Anglican missionary, undertook the task. His has been a labor of love. He has patiently pursued it and now, in his mid-eighties, has brought it to completion. He has chosen to write in English, for that is still the language which is most nearly the common medium for the educated throughout the country. In a three-volume survey of approximately eleven hundred pages he has endeavored to cover the history of Christianity from the beginning to the present. He has dealt with all the main churches in Europe and the Middle East—Eastern, Roman, and Protestant. He has omitted the Western Hemisphere, the Pacific, and Eastern and South Asia. So far as is humanly possible, he has endeavored to write without prejudice against any communion and to present fairly the "lights and shades" of each. He has built his story around outstanding individuals and movements. His literary style is eminently readable and the narrative is lightened and made vivid by incidents and legends. From time

to time he points out the bearing of phases of the story upon the problems of the Indian churches.

The volumes have weaknesses as well as highly commendable features. They lack maps and bibliographies, and one volume has no index. The omission of Thomas Aquinas is hard to understand. Many a story is accepted uncritically, and here and there are mistakes of fact. The most serious deficiency is the failure to include the Americas, Australasia, and South and East Asia. The author explains the absence of sections on India by saying that he hopes that some scholar will eventually write the history of Christianity in that country. But if Indian Christians are to have an appreciation of the Church Universal, they must certainly be made acquainted with the course of Christianity in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, the islands of the Pacific, Africa south of the Sahara, and their eastern and southern Asiatic neighbors. Let us hope that the author will still have time and strength to remedy the defect in a fourth volume.

KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE

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The American Sex Revolution. By PITIRIM A. SOROKIN. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1956. 186 pp. \$3.50 (cloth), \$2.00 (paper).

Professor Sorokin seems to have intended a tract for the times. In fact he has delivered himself of a diatribe, a tract against the times; for he takes up five-sixths of his pages in denunciation of the "sexualization" of American and all Western culture, and then in the remaining thirty pages (except for about ten which continue the castigation) he advocates its "desexualization." "On our life-ways, no posters warn us with: Danger! Slow Down! Sex Anarchy Ahead!" This sentence (p. 131) sufficiently illustrates his view of current social life and of the need for his essay. It also illustrates the level of writing.

The thesis is that the removal of sexual inhibitions and repressions, especially when that is supported by pseudo-science, is causing the disintegration of self and of society. The "pseudo-science" he has in mind seems to be chiefly the works of Freud, but when he refers to them he fails to distinguish the theory of psychopathology from the theory of psychology, which makes the attack ill-informed as well as cantankerous. Sorokin's own theory of the cause of neurosis is that environmental disappointments upset sex gluttons (p. 64)! The anarchy of society he discovers in the loss of creativity in America: (here he renders critical judgments with the greatest of ease) in the social sciences there are Freudian anthropologists and few today like Ward, Sumner, and Boas; in philosophy no worthy successors to Emerson, James, Royce, and Dewey, no Plato or Kant; in music, no Chopin or Schubert; in literature, hardly any like Twain, Melville, Poe, or Whitman, and no Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare. As to religion, he is especially distressed at "the astounding reconciliation of Christianity and Judaism with Freudianism" which "clearly demonstrates the advancing contamination of our religions" (p. 46); but also America today has no Moses or Isaiah, (*sic!* p. 142) nor any of the stature of Jonathan Edwards, Roger Williams, Brigham Young, or Mary Baker Eddy (p. 143).

All this disintegration is to be met by "desexualization," the rather exaggerated term he employs for "a noble sexual order" where, he states, sex is not eliminated but reconstructed in "total love."

As is the case with many sermons *against* sin, so with this essay, one is left in doubt whether the preacher is really *for* the human nature which in sin is yet to be redeemed.

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Historical Development of the Principle of Toleration in British Life. By

HERBERT BUTTERFIELD. London: Epworth Press, 1957. 17 pp. 2 s.

The quality of a historian is revealed more clearly by a pamphlet than by a monograph. Only a great expert can deal with an important subject in the space of a few pages. Proportion, balance, perspective, emphasis—all become matters of great importance, and only a thorough master of his subject can be brief without being superficial. This pamphlet is a particularly telling example of this exacting art. Professor Butterfield's sweep is great, since he sets the problem in wide context; his grasp of essentials is unerring, and his comments are illuminating and profound.

Nonreligious influences contributed to the development of toleration no less than did religious ones. But Professor Butterfield makes it clear that, while religious convictions created innumerable tensions and posed problems of a peculiarly baffling kind, it was ultimately their constraint which established toleration as an essential element in our Western heritage. In this process, the strong figure of Cromwell stands out with particular dignity. He held enlightened views of Christian liberty; what is more remarkable, his conduct was even more tolerant than his convictions.

GERALD R. CRAGG

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Pathways of the Inner Life. By GEORGES A. BARROIS. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1956. 263 pp. \$5.00.

This is an anthology of ninety-one excerpts from thirty-three Christians ranging from Gregory of Nyssa to Albert Schweitzer. The author is a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, and formulated this book while lecturing and conducting a seminar on the Christian Doctrine of Prayer and on Christian Mysticism.

Dr. Barrois sets all of the writers within their context through his helpful historical commentary on the life of each. The book is divided into seven sections: from the Church Fathers to the thirteenth century, the late medieval period, the Renaissance in Spain, Germany, France, and England, and finally, the last fifty years.

The purpose of the author is to have each Christian express something of his encounter with God, and the relevance of faith to human life and thought. Not only does he include well-known figures such as Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Thomas à Kempis, Savonarola, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Brother Lawrence, George Fox, John Bunyan, John Wesley, Rufus Jones, and Thomas Kelly, but also lesser-known Christians such as Hugh of St. Victor, Meister Eckhart, John Gerson, Jacob Boehme, and Johann Georg Hamann.

The book is a competent and well-planned guide both to the devotional life of readers and to the introductory study of the Christians presented. Each excerpt is well explained, and in some cases the author has done the translating himself.

DOUGLAS J. NELSON

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The Inevitable Choice: Vedanta Philosophy or Christian Gospel. By EDMUND D. SOPER. New York: Abingdon Press, 1957. 192 pp. \$2.50.

East Is East: Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, a Comparison. By PETER FINGESTEN. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956. xvii-181 pp. \$3.00.

The new political and religious situation in India with the increasing insecurity within western Christendom makes it inevitable that Christians assess again their approach to Hinduism. Are all religions the same? Are there many roads that lead to the top of the mountain where man finds God and is saved? Can you be a Christian and a Hindu at the same time?

The Hindu would, of course, argue Yes. He admits the validity of all religions, and therefore accepts Christ and Christian philosophies as one important fragment of the totality of God. Since this uncritical tolerance is dominant in much of Western thinking today, it is no wonder that books are coming out in increasing numbers dealing with the questions of Christian decision and discipleship.

The two books, *The Inevitable Choice* and *East Is East*, are both a part of this development. Their approach, however, is very different.

East Is East deals with the differences between Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The author goes to great pains to show that the Christian faith does not derive from Buddhism or Hinduism, and here he makes his point. Furthermore, there is much suggestive material in the book and it is well prepared. Yet it is written as if we were still in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The author attempts to deal with the perplexing question of how to confront the Hindu by argument and ridicule. His book parades the sordid elements in both these Eastern religions and compares this with the best in Christianity. He writes without feeling for the individual Hindu man trying to probe and understand his world.

There is a pugnaciousness about his approach which would alienate any non-Christian, and this is the book's most serious weakness. It lacks that sense of humility, that awareness of the deep crisis within the West as well as the East, and thus I doubt if his book will reach either critical, thinking Christians or sensitive, bewildered, troubled Hindus seeking a new way of life.

The Inevitable Choice, by Edmund Soper, avoids this mistake. He writes as one who has felt the appeal of Hindu universality and tolerance. There is no chip on his shoulder, nor does he try to ridicule Hinduism, as penetrating and critical as his insights are. He recognizes that the contemporary encounter is vastly different from the nineteenth century. He sees that the Christian must approach the other religions with a deep sense of humility, seeking a depth of understanding of why a Hindu thinks and acts as he does. However, he argues this new situation cannot minimize the fact that a Christian is called to an "inevitable choice." Ultimately he must decide what his real relationship is with Jesus Christ and through Him with the community known as Christians. The Hindu denies that such a choice is necessary. In fact, to accept the necessity for such choice is a negation of the very essence of Hinduism. The challenge comes in the West as well as in the East. Is Jesus Christ the revealed Son of the living God and is His way, His life, His truth our salvation? Yes or no?

The problem we face is how to say Yes and yet, at the same time, to communicate this to non-Christians in such a way that they will feel that we are interested in them and are eager to listen as well as to speak.

TRACEY K. JONES, JR.

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Book Notices

Roland H. Bainton has written *Yale and the Ministry*, "A history of education for the Christian Ministry at Yale from the founding in 1701" (Harper, \$5.00). As always, this historian makes his personalities come alive, and the book is of broader than local significance. Dr. Bainton says: "The religious life of Southern New England for the last two centuries and a half exhibits a significant and unique development in the degree to which the major Christian themes were held in balance. Theology, piety, and social concern did not part company. . . . In the New World the three were nowhere so fully held in conjunction." The influence of Yale's type of balance has now expanded nationwide and further.

William Barclay of the University of Glasgow has for some time been writing a column in the *British Weekly* in which he expounds key words of New Testament Greek. Not only ministers but all kinds of lay people wrote in and asked that these pieces be collected in a book; and *A New Testament Wordbook* is now available from Harper & Brothers at \$2.50. "Here are the associations these words had with persons, with events, with ideas and with other words," their etymology, their use in other writings, and the "new dimension of meaning" they gain in the New Testament. He writes with "compelling and infectious enthusiasm for his subject."

When Egypt Ruled the East, by George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele, has been published in a revised edition by Chicago University Press at \$5.75. Originally published in 1942, it has been revised so extensively to include the latest archeological discoveries and some new interpretations that it is practically a new book and is expected to be a standard and basic work in Egyptian history for some time to come.

Marley Cole, author of the best-seller *Jehovah's Witnesses: The New World Society*, has now brought out a sequel, *Triumphant Kingdom* (Criterion Books, \$3.50). It is an enthusiastic journalistic account of what Marcus Bach has called "the fastest-growing religious movement in the world."

Macmillan has published two comprehensive textbooks: (1) *Philosophic Problems* (\$6.25), a book of readings representative of the various positions for use in an introductory course, edited by M. Mandelbaum, F. W. Gramlich (both Dartmouth) and A. R. Anderson (Yale). (2) *Religion in Modern Life*, by G. C. Hackman, C. W. Kegley, V. K. Nikander, professors of religion and philosophy at Wagner College (\$4.25): "Our primary aim in this book is to introduce any inquiring person to the nature of religion and to its function in the modern life of the Western world"—which implies emphasis on Judaism and Christianity, especially the latter.

The Hymn Society of America has published a long series of valuable papers of the Society, as well as new hymn collections and its periodical, *The Hymn*. Two recent notable papers are: *The Philosophy of the Hymn*, by Nancy White Thomas, and *Charles Wesley*, by Alfred Burton Haas. (297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., 35 cents each.)

From The Seabury Press we have *Dr. Lowrie of Princeton & Rome*, "Nine Essays in Acknowledgement of a Debt," edited by the late A. C. Zabriskie (\$3.50). Such writers as T. O. Wedel, J. A. Pike, H. A. Johnson, A. T. Mollegen, and Dean Zabriskie deal with various aspects of Walter Lowrie's many-sided work (Kierkegaard, Fechner, New Testament Theology, Christian art, archeology, and liturgics); a few delightful rejoinders by W. L. himself are included.



